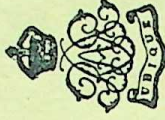
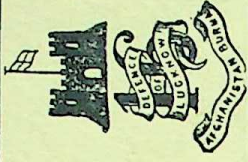
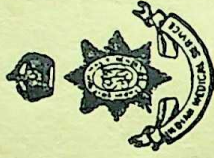
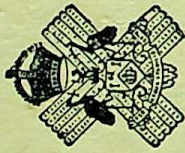


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## A Note

With the publication of the Early History of Bengal by Mr. P. L. Paul M. A., the Indian Research Institute presents before the scholarly world the second number of the Indian History Series. The object of taking up this series is to bring out a comprehensive religious, cultural, political and social History of India by publication in separate volumes of the history of its places and provinces. The first number of the series was a Monograph on Gaya and Buddha Gaya by Dr. B. M. Barua M. A. D. Lit. (Lond.) which is a Holy Shrine to the Hindus and the Buddhists alike from ancient times.

As has been pointed out by Dr. R. C. Majumdar M. A., Ph. D., the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University in his Foreword to this volume, it serves as an outline of a comprehensive history of early Bengal. It will be complete in two volumes and the political history is dealt with in the first volume. The second volume will give the religious, cultural, and social history and we expect to bring it out at an early date.

Lastly I appeal once again to all lovers of history and Indology, public libraries and directors of public instructions of different provinces to extend to us their valuable co-operation by liberally subscribing to this and other publications of this Institute, each of which deals with a particular aspect of Indian Civilisation and Culture.

1st Vaisākha 1346 B. S. }  
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170, Maniktala Street, CALCUTTA.

SATIS CHANDRA SEAL



## Errata

Page	II	fn 5	read	Division	for	Division
„	III	fn 4	„	of	„	oi
„	IV	line 18	„	the	„	thea
„	VII	„ 30	„	Aranyaka	„	Aranyak
„	7	line	insert	,	after	‘Purāṇa
„	8	fn 4	read	has been	for	is
„	14	line 6	insert	,	after	bhaṭṭāraka
„	17	line 14	„	.	for	,
„	22	fn I	read	after	„	after
„	23	line I	insert	,	after	vow
„	28	line 7	read	than	for	then
„	„	„ 15	„	Jātakhaḍga	„	Jātakhaḍga
„	37	„ 22	„	themselves	„	themselve
„	38	„ 12	„	Nārāyaṇapāla	„	Nārāyaṇapala
„	39	„ 15	„	necessarily	„	necssarily
„	41	„ 12	insert	.	for	,
„	46	„ 21	„	“	before	elder
„	47	„ 13	read	dūtāka	for	dātāka
„	48	„ 9	„	Vākpāla	„	Vakpāla
„	„	„ 18	„	Rājyapāla	„	Rajyapāla
„	„	„ 30	insert	.	after	thereon
„	52	„ 12	read	anadhikṛta	for	anaduikṛta
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## Foreword

The Early History of Bengal by Mr. Pramode Lal Paul is a noteworthy attempt by a young Bengali scholar to bring together the known facts regarding the political history of Bengal during the Hindu period. It undoubtedly marks a distinct advance over the existing books on the subject. The author has studied the subject critically, and presented the facts in a detached spirit, free from prejudices and predilections for any particular point of view. It may not be possible to accept all his opinions and conclusions but there can be no question of his thoroughness of study and an honest endeavour to judge every question from all possible points of view. A critical study of the history of Bengal is of recent origin, and scanty as our materials are, many years must elapse before we can sketch a fairly complete outline of its main stages of evolution. But it will be impossible to achieve this end if we do not occasionally take stock of our knowledge in the shape of preliminary sketches such as the present book professes to be. Mr. Paul has no ambition to write the history of Bengal. But he has facilitated the task of the future historian by a painstaking study of the relevant materials and the results achieved by him are certainly both creditable and encouraging. There are many important problems regarding the political history of Bengal which at present defy solution. Mr. Paul has presented them in all their aspects. As the Sanskrit proverb says, 'Vāde Vāde jāyate tatvabodha.' So further discussions on the problems so clearly presented before us are likely to help us in arriving at a correct solution. Mr. Paul would regard his labour amply justified if this book paves the way for a fuller and better treatment of history of Bengal. He puts no higher claim, and I have no doubt that his humble attempt fully deserves the encouragement and appreciation from students of Indian History.

R. C. MAJUMDAR.



## Author's Preface

Thanks to the recent progress of archaeological studies and to the untiring researches of a band of enthusiastic scholars, it is now possible to write a history of ancient Bengal. In this volume, an attempt has been made to sketch the outline of political history from the earliest times to the Muslim conquest. The next volume dealing with cultural and social history will be shortly out.

In preparation of this volume I am thankful to many friends. I must express my thankfulness to Dr. R. C. Majumdar under whose guidance this work was undertaken and from whom more than anyone else I have learnt how to handle the sources of ancient history. To Dr. N. K. Bhattasali I am indebted to a degree for which no amount of thanks would suffice. He has taken a keen interest in the progress of the work, has readily helped me in every possible way with his expert knowledge in the subject and has kept the Dacca Museum Library open for me, day and night, sometimes to his great inconvenience. I have to tender my heartfelt thanks to Prof. V. Bhattacharyya, Dr. D. C. Ganguly and Dr. R. G. Basak for some helpful suggestions and to my friends Mr. A. K. Shom and Mr. A. J. Bhattacharyya for encouragement. I record hereby my grateful appreciation of the assistance I have received in going through the manuscript and the proofs to Babu Mati Lal Paul B. A., Headmaster, Tarkibandar Victory H. E. School, and to Messrs M. N. Roychowdhury M. A., Nani Lal Sengupta M. A., Chittaranjan Das B. A. and Jyotish Chandra Paul B. A., In fine, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Satis Chandra Seal M. A., B. L., the young and energetic Secretary of the Indian Research Institute, but for whose help it would have been impossible to bring out the book.

I crave the indulgence of the readers for a few serious misprints that have crept in. An index and a map, so invaluable to a work of this kind, will be added in the next volume.

15TH APRIL, 1939.

P. L. PAUL.



# ERRATA

Page 61	line 12	read	III) Bāla-vallabhi-bhujaṅga for Vāla-Vallabhujāṅga
„ 65	„ 2	„	winning for wining
„ 68	„ 18	„	Madanapāla „ Madanpala
„ 70	„ 10	insert	Indra after son
„ 84	„ 17	read	dynasty for family
„ 87	„ 14	read	Kāñci „ Kāñci
„ „	„ 16	„	„ „
„ 92	„ 8	„	is „ ls
„ 93	„ 14	„	ancient „ anciect
„ „	„ 27	„	the „ tne
„ 95	„ 16	„	A. H. „ A. D.
„ 106	„ 26	insert	. after A. D.
„ 109	„ 22	„	, after Vaṅgas
„ 112	„ 13	„	work before of
„ 115	„ 3	„	, after Parameśvara
„ 116	„ 2	„	Arthaśāstra for Arthaśastra
„ „	„ 22	read	under for of
„ 118	fn 2	insert	, after village
„ 125	line 12	read	Tadā-niyuktakas for Tatiniyuktas
„ 126	„ 12	„	period for perid
„ 151	„ 20	insert	. after correct
„ 158	„ 20	read	religious for religion
„ „	„ 22	„	Vithyādhikaraṇa for Vitrādhikaraṇa



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# THE EARLY HISTORY OF BENGAL

## INTRODUCTION

ANCIENT GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS—It is indeed a very difficult task to describe the boundaries of geographical divisions and localities of ancient Bengal, as there is no clue to determining the location of some of them. It may be surmised that in ancient Bengal, as in the present time, the natural boundaries were generally the rivers whose beds had been constantly shifting. Our difficulty is further enhanced by the fact that some localities seem to have been included within, or contemporaneous with, the bigger and well-known geographical units, and the boundaries changed with political circumstances also. In the fourth Jaina Upāṅga, the Pannavaṇā,<sup>1</sup> Tāmralipti (Tamluk in modern Midnapore) is included in Vaṅga, and Koṭivarṣa (Koṭivarṣa in modern Dinajpur) is mentioned as the chief city of Lāḍha (Rāḍha). This seems to refer to a very early period, when the political expansion of Vaṅga and Rāḍha was at its zenith. In the Pāla and Sena periods two broad and commonly known geographical divisions were Gauḍa and Vaṅga.

Gauḍa included both Rāḍha and Varendra. In the Haraha inscription of Išānavarman,<sup>2</sup> dated in 554 A. D., Gauḍas have been described as 'Samudrāśrayān.' It is stated in the drama 'Prabodhacandraodaya'<sup>3</sup> that Rāḍha was included in Gauḍa. It is known from an inscription of the Madras Presidency that Dakṣiṇa (southern) Rāḍha was within Gauḍadeśa.<sup>4</sup> All these

1. IHQ, 1932 pp. 521ff.

2. EI, XIV, pp. 117ff.

3. For the correct reading of the passage in question, see IHQ, 1932, pp. 521ff.

4. Rangachariar, 'Ins. of the Madras Presidency' I, p. 353; see IHQ, 1937, pp. 162.



go to show that Gauḍa comprised Rāḍha. Rāḍha is roughly represented by the modern Burdwan Presidency, and it is quite probable that some portion of the Manbhum and Hazaribagh districts were also included within it. Rāḍha was divided into Dakṣiṇa Rāḍha and Uttara Rāḍha by the river Ajaya,<sup>1</sup> and these two divisions were also known as Suhma and Brahma respectively.<sup>2</sup> From the Tirumalai inscription of Rājendra Cola and from the Irdagrāt of the Kamboja king Nayapāladeva<sup>3</sup> it seems that Daṇḍabhukti comprised the south-western part of the Midnapore district and some portion of the Balasore district and it was a separate geographical unit from Rāḍha. Tāmraliptikas are mentioned as a tribe or people in ancient literature, and in Yuan Chwang's time Tāmralipti was one of the principalities of Bengal visited by him.

The ancient name of northern Bengal was Puṇḍravardhana and the identification of its capital Puṇḍranagara with Mahasthan in the Bogra district is certain after the publication of the Mahasthan inscription in Old Brahmi script.<sup>4</sup> It was one of the famous cities of ancient India. In the inscriptions of the Gupta period Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti seems to have comprised northern Bengal, whereas it is definite that this 'bhukti' in the Pāla and Sena periods included some portion of eastern Bengal also.<sup>5</sup> Later northern Bengal was known as Varendra. From the Silimpur inscription<sup>6</sup> Varendra seems to be mentioned as a tract within the Puṇḍra country. The earliest mention of Varendra is found in a

1. JRAS, 1935, pp. 73ff.

2. IHQ, 1932, pp. 521ff.

3. EI, XXII, pp. 153ff.

4. IHQ, 1934, pp. 57ff.

5. JRAS, 1935., pp. 73ff. It is quite possible that the country of the Puṇḍras comprised some portion of Burdwan Division also. See 'Deśavali-vivṛti' written by Jagamohona Pandit. 'Descriptive Cat. of Sans. Mss. in the Govt. Collection, History and Geography,' p. 63. It is said in this book that there were seven deśas in Puṇḍradeśa, viz. Gauḍa, Varendra, Nivṛti, Suhma, Vardhamāna, Varāhabhuma, Jaṅgala Jhārikhaṇḍa. Also see JASB, 1897, pt. I, pp. 85-112.

6. EI, XIII, pp. 283ff.



south Indian inscription<sup>1</sup> of 967 A. D., in which a Brahman immigrant has been described as 'Gauḍa-cūḍāmaṇi' and 'Vārendra-dyoti-kāriṇa.' It is therefore likely that the name Varendra was well-known by the tenth century. Varendra is roughly represented by the Rajshahi Division excluding perhaps Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts. Some portions of the Purnea district might have been included within it.

It is not possible to define the boundary of Vaṅga with any degree of accuracy and preciseness. At the present state of our knowledge the rivers Hoogly and Brahmaputra seem to be the western and eastern boundaries, and on the north was Varendra and to the south, the Bay of Bengal. It is difficult to say whether Harikela and Samatāṭa were included within Vaṅga. In the "Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa"<sup>2</sup> these three countries are mentioned side by side in the description of the countries where 'asura' speech was prevalent. In view of this evidence we think that the identification of Vaṅga with Harikela by the lexicographer Hemacandra<sup>3</sup> should be accepted with some reservation and it is also to be noted that Hemacandra wrote in the 12th century from Guzrat. Mention may be made of the fact that in the two Mss<sup>4</sup> of the

1. EI, XXI, p. 260ff, Prof. Bhandarkar in his 'Aśoka' ( second edition, pp. 36-37 ) conjectures that Pārimdas of the Girnar inscription of Aśoka may be identical with Vārendras. But it is far from being certain.

2. Edited by Ganapati Shastri, 22nd 'Paṭala' pp. 232-233.

3. Hemacandra writes, 'Campāstu Aṅgā Vaṅgāstu Harikelīyā.' In order to explain the obvious difficulty Dr. H. C. Roy Chowdhury suggested that the term Vaṅga was used in a broader and narrower geographical sense and it is in its narrower sense identical with Harikela. But there is no evidence to show that there was a broader Vaṅga and a narrower one. We agree with Dr. Roy Chowdhury in regarding Harikela as a small principality, compared with Vaṅga ( 'Mānasī-O-Marmavāṇī', 1935-36, B. S. pp. 566ff ). In the Chittagong plate of Kāntideva Harikela is called a 'maṇḍala.'

4. I am thankful to Mr. S. C. Banerjee, keeper of the Dacca University Mss., for drawing my attention to these two Mss. They are (1) No. 2141B, named 'Rudrākṣa-māhātmya,' folio I, and (2) No. 1451, named 'Rupa-cintāmoṇi-koṣa' by Yādavānanda Dāsa, composed in 1515 S. E., folio 15A.



Dacca University collection Harikola (= Harikela?) is synonymous with Śrīhaṭṭa (Sylhet), adjacent to Kēmarūpa. According to I-tsing and Tan-Kang, Harikela was the eastern limit of eastern India,<sup>1</sup> and Yu-he writes that it was 30 days' journey from Ceylon and 100 yojanas from Nālandā. From the Rampal plate of Śricandra it appears that it was contiguous to Candradvīpa and Harikela might have included some portion of Bakerganj and Noakhali districts. It was a coastal country and there was direct communication between Harikela and Ceylon.

The word Samataṭa implies that it was a coastal country. Cunningham<sup>2</sup> is of opinion that Samataṭa is to be identified with the delta of the Ganges including the Sunderbans between the Huranghata river and Bakerganj. In the Barrackpore plate of Vijayasena it is stated that in the Khāḍi-maṇḍala of Puṇḍravar-dhana-bhukti land was measured according to the 'Nala' standard prevalent in Samataṭa. Khāḍi is at present the name of a 'pargana' in the Diamond Harbour Sub-division and it can be suggested that this part of the 24-Parganas was included in Samataṭa<sup>3</sup>. The Baghaura image inscription of the 3rd year of Mahīpāl I shows that some portion of modern Tippera was included in Samataṭa<sup>4</sup>.

Candradvīpa was another locality in south-eastern Bengal and is still a 'pargana' in the Bakerganj district. It might have included some portion of Khulna<sup>5</sup> and Noakhali<sup>6</sup> districts.

Dr. H. C. Roychowdhury expressed the opinion that Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla are two separate countries and suggested that Vaṅgāla was probably identical with Candradvīpa.<sup>7</sup> We differed from Dr. Roychowdhury because the only evidence which goes to

1. Takakasu, 'I-tsing,' p. xlvii; Chavanes, 'Memore de Religione Eminentis,' p. 106, pp. 144-5.

2. 'Ancient Geography of India,' pp. 501-03.

3. IB, p. 61.

4. EI, XVII, pp. 353ff.

5. S. Mitra, 'History of Jessore and Khulna' (in Bengali), p. 140.

6. P. C. Bagchi, Intro., 'Kaulajñāna-Nirṇaya,' pp. 25ff.

7. 'Mānasī-O-Marmavāṇī,' 1335-6 B. S., pp. 566ff.



support his view is the Ablur inscription of Vijjala<sup>1</sup> and because the particular invasion of Bengal by this Kalacurya king has no historical basis at all.<sup>2</sup> The poet might have meant to repeat the same incident by referring to the conquest of Vaṅga and by alluding to the killing of the king of Vaṅgāla. Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla cannot be regarded as two separate countries on the strength of this evidence alone. We therefore observed that Vaṅgāla seems to be an etymological variation of Vaṅga, probably made by the southerners and foreigners. In a short note<sup>3</sup> Dr. N. N. Chaudhury says that Vaṅga is derived from the Tibetan word 'baus' and means marshy and moist. The second part of Vaṅgāla, the Dravidian 'ālam,' is a verbal derivative from the root āl, meaning to possess. Therefore Vaṅgālam means marshy and moist region.

In course of further study of the subject we find Bangala (= Vaṅgāla) has been mentioned in many south Indian inscriptions.<sup>4</sup> In two records, as in the Ablur inscription, Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla have been mentioned, thereby showing that they were probably two separate countries.<sup>5</sup> Again, in the Hāmmira Mahākāvya of Nayacandra Sūri (composed before 1496 A. D.) Banga and Bangala have been mentioned side by side.<sup>6</sup> It must be noted that exploits in Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla in these four records seem to be vague generalisations and poetic exaggerations. But the fact that in four separate records Vaṅga and Vaṅgāla are to be found side by side goes to strengthen Dr. Roychowdhury's opinion. It is also to be noted that we do not find any mention of Vaṅgāla in any record before the 10th century.

Mr. R. C. Banerjee locates the Vaṅgāla country to the east of the Brahmaputra river<sup>7</sup>. Attention may be drawn to Marco Polo's account of the Bangala country. The king of Mien

1. IHQ, XII, p. 77, fn 61.

2. Ibid., XI, p. 769.

3. 'Modern Review,' September, 1936.

4. 'Epigraphia Carnatica,' V Intro. 14n, 19; Cn, 179; VI, Cm 137; VII, Intro, 30 sk, 119; IX Bn, 96; IA, IX, pp, 333ff.

5. 'Epigraphia Carnatica,' V, Cn, 179, Eng. p. 202. IA, IX! pp. 333ff.

6. IA, 1879, p. 58.

7. IC, II, pp. 756 ff.



(Burma) is also called the king of Bangala (= Vaṅgāla)<sup>1</sup>. As regards its geographical position, Yule remarks<sup>2</sup>: "Marco conceives of Bangala, not in India, but as being like Mien, a province on the confines of India, as lying to the south of that kingdom, and as being at the (south) western extremity of a great traverse line which runs (north-east) into Kweichan and Sze-ch'wan. All these conditions point consistently to one locality; that, however, is not Bengal but Pegu.....And possibly the name of Pegu may have contributed to this error, as well as the possible fact that the kings of Burma did at this time claim to be kings of Bengal, whilst they actually were kings of Pegu." This does not preclude the possibility of locating Vaṅgāla as a separate country to the east of the Brahmaputra. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the kings of Burma had important political and social relations with this part of Bengal. Anoratha (1044-77 A. D.), one of the most powerful kings in Burmese history, extended his conquests as far as Bengal<sup>3</sup>. A prince of Paṭṭikerā (still a 'pargana' in Tippera) married the daughter of the Burmese king, Kyanzittha (1084-1112 A.D.). The next king Alaungstthu (1112-87 A.D.) married a princess of Paṭṭikerā. The Mainamati plate of Raṇavaṅkamalla<sup>4</sup> bears testimony to the Burmese influence in that region. This perhaps explains in a way why the kings of Burma and Pagan were also called kings of Bangala by Marco.

ADMIXTURE OF DIFFERENT RACIAL BLOOD—Opinions of scholars are divided on the question of different racial elements in Bengal, but the fact that the present Bengali population is the admixture of different racial bloods seems to be conceded by many. Sylvian Levi<sup>5</sup> believes that Aṅga-Vaṅga, Kalinga-Triliṅga, Oḍra-Puṇḍra, Pulinda-Kulinda, Kośala-Tosala belong to 'Munda, Kol' and 'Mon-khemar' group of languages whose traces are found in the

1 The account of Marco Polo translated by Yule. Yule takes Bangala to refer to the entire province of Bengal Vol. II, p. 98., note 99, 100; for the account of the Bangala country, see pp. 114 ff. 2 Ibid., p. 128.

3 Phare, 'History of Burma,' p.37. 4 IHQ 1933, p.285. 5 P. C. Bagchi, 'Pre-Dravidian and Pre-Aryan in India', Part III 'Vicitra', 1340 B. S., pp. 413 ff.



Khasia hills of Assam, upper and lower Burma, Nicobar islands and Malaya Archipelago. These languages are denoted by the general term *Austrie*. The common ethnic origin of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra, Kalinga and Suhma has perhaps found expression in the legendary story of their origin in the Mahābhārata, Purāṇas and the Harivaṁśa as the sons of 'Rṣi' Dirghmanta through his union with Sudosṇā, wife of the demon king Bali. Risley described the Bengali type "as a blend of Dravidian and Mongolian elements with a strain of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher groups." This theory has been challenged by some scholars but has not been replaced by a better one. Thus Dr. B. S. Guha considers the Ma'as of Santal-Parganas, Bankura and Midnapore as Austroloid and finds traces of Alpine race in the Brahmanas and Kāyasthas, and Mongolian element in the Brahmaputra delta.<sup>1</sup>

As regards Aryan immigrations, Oldenberg, Hoernle and Grierson hold that there was a previous migration of a band of Aryans before the coming of the Vedic Aryans, and the earlier ones were pushed into the outlying provinces of northern India like Bengal, Behar, Assam, Maharastra and Gujrat. According to R. P. Chanda, the Outer Aryans came later across the tableland of Central India, when the Inner Aryans lived in the Kuru-Pāṇchala country. The theory of Outer and Inner Aryans has been questioned recently by Dr. N. K. Datta<sup>2</sup> who is of opinion that there were two types of culture—the older of the Panjab and the later of the Midland. "It is the former type that spread in Eastern India and later the Midland culture began to conquer its way in the east." Scholars who have gone deep into the question are thus at variance. But it seems clear from the stray references to Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Kalinga in the 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,' 'Aitareya Āraṇyak' and 'Baudhāyana-sūtra' that the peoples or tribes of eastern India were different from those who composed these books<sup>3</sup>. The predominant non-Aryan character of the population perhaps accounts for the popularity of the non-Brahmanical

1 'Prabāsi,' 1940 B. S., pp. 257

2. 'Aryanisation of India,' Ch. II, Previous opinions summarised and criticised.

3. Vide infra.



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ADMIXTURE OF DIFFERENT RACIAL BLOOD—Opinions of scholars are divided on the question of different racial elements in Bengal, but the fact that the present Bengali population is the admixture of different racial bloods seems to be conceded by many. Sylvian Levi<sup>5</sup> believes that Aṅga-Vaṅga, Kaliṅga-Triliṅga, Oḍra-Puṇḍra, Pulinda-Kulinda, Kośala-Tosala belong to 'Munda, Kol' and 'Mon-khemar' group of languages whose traces are found in the

1 The account of Marco Polo translated by Yule. Yule takes Bangala to refer to the entire province of Bengal Vol. II, p. 98., note 99, 100; for the account of the Bangala country, see pp. 114 ff. 2 Ibid., p. 128.

3 Phare, 'History of Burma,' p.37. 4. IHQ 1933, p.285. 5 P. C. Bagchi, 'Pre-Dravidian and Pre-Aryan in India', Part III 'Vicitra', 1340 B. S., pp. 413 ff.



Khasia hills of Assam, upper and lower Burma, Nicobar islands and Malaya Archipelago. These languages are denoted by the general term *Austrie*. The common ethnic origin of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra, Kaliṅga and Suhma has perhaps found expression in the legendary story of their origin in the Mahābhārata, Purāṇas and the Harivaṁśa as the sons of 'R̥ṣi' Dirghmanta through his union with Sudoṣṇā, wife of the demon king Bali. Risley described the Bengali type "as a blend of Dravidian and Mongolian elements with a strain of Indo-Aryan blood in the higher groups." This theory has been challenged by some scholars but has not been replaced by a better one. Thus Dr. B. S. Guha considers the Malas of Santal-Parganas, Bankura and Midnapore as Austroloid and finds traces of Alpine race in the Brahmanas and Kāyasthas, and Mongolian element in the Brahmaputra delta.<sup>1</sup>

As regards Aryan immigrations, Oldenberg, Hoernle and Grierson hold that there was a previous migration of a band of Aryans before the coming of the Vedic Aryans, and the earlier ones were pushed into the outlying provinces of northern India like Bengal, Behar, Assam, Maharastra and Guzrat. According to R. P. Chanda, the Outer Aryans came later across the tableland of Central India, when the Inner Aryans lived in the Kuru-Pāṇchala country. The theory of Outer and Inner Aryans has been questioned recently by Dr. N. K. Datta<sup>2</sup> who is of opinion that there were two types of culture—the older of the Panjab and the later of the Midland. "It is the former type that spread in Eastern India and later the Midland culture began to conquer its way in the east." Scholars who have gone deep into the question are thus at variance. But it seems clear from the stray references to Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Kaliṅga in the 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,' 'Aitareya Āraṇyak' and 'Baudhāyana-sūtra' that the peoples or tribes of eastern India were different from those who composed these books<sup>3</sup>. The predominant non-Aryan character of the population perhaps accounts for the popularity of the non-Brahmanical

1 'Prabāṣi,' 1940 B. S., pp. 257

2. 'Aryanisation of India,' Ch. II. Previous opinions summarised and criticised.

3. Vide infra.



religions like Buddhism and Jainism in eastern India. These two factors seem to have combined to prevent the rapid Brahmanisation of Bengal and from that standpoint perhaps the migrations of Brahmanas from the midlands were welcome to the followers of their faith even in the later periods.

**MANY UNEXPLORED SITES**—Many ancient sites and localities have not been explored yet. Even the few sites declared as protected area by the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act have not been excavated. The rich finds at Paharpur, Mahasthan and Rangamati should remove the old notion that ancient sites of Bengal are not worth excavating. Paharpur finds alone can in many ways interpret the artistic and religious evolution of ancient Bengal and they have enriched our knowledge about those phases to an unexpected degree. The undertaking of the excavation of Banagarh by the Calcutta University is expected to throw light on many disputed events. It is the city of the demon king Bāṇa of the Pūrāṇas, the headquarter of the Koṭivarṣaviṣaya of the Gupta period, the site of the mysterious pillar of a Kamboja king and the mounds of this place have been described as "second only to those at Paharpur." The tours<sup>1</sup> undertaken by a student of archaeology in Dinajpur, Malda and Bogra districts have revealed the fact that most of the important villages abound in images of iconographic interest. The 'Bīrbhūma-Vivaraṇa'<sup>2</sup> contains imperfect reproductions of some images which are of great iconographic importance and exhibit high artistic excellence. Its author for the first time drew attention to the Paikore pillar inscription of Kalacuri Karna which proves beyond doubt that he penetrated in the very heart of Bengal in course of his invasion which was so long doubted, as the information was from the Tibetan source and as the 'Rāmacarita' gives a different story. There cannot be any denying the fact that some of the disputed events and gaps of the early history of Bengal cannot be explained unless fresh materials throw some light on them. Explorations and excavations of important sites are, therefore, of paramount importance and imperative necessity.

1. JASB, 1932, pp. 151, 173, 185.

2. Published by Hare Krishna Mukherjee,



# THE EARLY HISTORY OF BENGAL

## CHAPTER I

### From earliest times to the Gupta period

There is no mention of any part of Bengal in the Rg-Veda. In the 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa'<sup>1</sup> it is said that the Puṇḍras, Andhras and Sabaras live on the border of the Ārya country and the bulk of them are Dasyus. In the 'Aitareya Āraṇyaka'<sup>2</sup> Vaṅgas, Vagadhas (= Magadhas) and Ceras have been compared with birds. Baudhāyana<sup>3</sup> quotes older authorities (Bhallavins) to show that any one visiting Puṇḍra, Vaṅga and Kāliṅga had to perform some purificatory sacrifices. It seems that in the later Vedic period Bengal was inhabited by tribes or peoples who belonged to a different stock of population from these Brahmanical writers and contact with these tribes was avoided by them as far as possible.

Manu<sup>4</sup> refers to the Pauṇḍrakas as one of the Kṣatriya tribes or peoples who had degraded themselves to the status of the Sūdras for their neglect of the sacred rites and for not consulting the Brahmanas. The 'Anugītā'<sup>5</sup> mentions the Pauṇḍras as one of the Kṣatriya tribes who fled into the mountains and other inaccessible places in fear of Jāmadagni and neglected their prescribed duties. The legendary story of the five sons of Bali, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kāliṅga, Puṇḍra and Suhma, may be construed to mean that the ruling princes and high dignitaries were coming into contact with the Aryans. All these references perhaps point to the fact that in a subsequent period when the Aryan settlements were

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1. VIII, 18.

2. II, 1, I.

3. I, 2, 14.

4. SBE, XXV, p. 412.

5. SBE, VIII, p. 295.



growing, they tried to connect these tribes with them by some stories and legends. They were not yet strictly conforming themselves to Aryan rites and customs and hence they were called degraded Kṣatriyas and Sūdras. Anyway, the Aryans were coming into contact with Bengal in post-Vedic period and could not neglect the power of the original tribes of the country.

We learn from the 'Mahābhārata' that Vaṅga and Puṇḍra were subject to Jarāśanda of Magadha. In course of Bhīma's expedition<sup>1</sup> he is said to have defeated Vāsudeva of Puṇḍra, Samudrasena of Vaṅga and an unnamed king of Suhma. In addition to the above mentioned tribes or peoples we know the existence of many others from the description of his victories. Prasuhmas are mentioned along with Suhmas and seem to have occupied adjacent territories. Tāmraliptakas and Karvaṭas<sup>2</sup> also seem to have been peoples of western Bengal. The seacoast and islands of the Bay were inhabited by the Kirātas and Mlecchas.

The description of the kingdom of Aṅga in the 'Mahābhārata' and Buddhist literature goes to indicate that some portions of Bengal were sometimes included within it. Karṇa, king of Aṅga, brought troops from Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Kaliṅga in support of the Kauravas. The Buddhist literature bears ample testimony to the greatness of the Aṅga kingdom.<sup>3</sup> It tops the list of the sixteen great kingdoms in the 'Aṅguttara-Nikāya.' The 'Kathāsarita-sāgara' alludes to the fact that the kingdom of Aṅga at one time extended to the sea and one of its cities, Viṭaṅkapura, was situated on the seaside. It continued a long struggle with Magadha until it was finally annexed to the Magadhan empire by Bimbisāra.

The incursion of Aṅga within the Magadhan empire perhaps did not mean the annexation of Bengal also. The existence of a powerful kingdom in south-western Bengal, called Gangaridai,

1. Śānti Parva, Ch. 30, (Calcutta edition)

2. For their location see IHQ., VIII, pp. 521 ff; SPP. 1340 B, S. 55 ff.

3. For full references, see Dr. H. C. Roychowdhury, PHAI, pp. 75ff; Dr. Majumdar, The Early History of Bengal, pp. 6ff.



at the time of Alexander's invasion is attested by the classical writers.<sup>1</sup> Diodorus ( 49 B. C.-A. D. 14 ) says that it was reported to Alexander, "Beyond these (the Indus, the desert and the Ganges) were situated the dominions of the nation of the Braisioi ( Prasii ) and the Gangaridai, whose king, Xandrames, had an army of 20,000 horse, 200,000 infantry, 2000, chariots and 4,000 elephants trained and equipped for war. Poros confirmed the report and further informed Alexander that the king of Gangaridai was thought to be the son of a barber and was not much respected. His father won the affection of the queen who murdered the old king treacherously. In this way the ruling king's father became king. Speaking of Indian nations as a whole in a very general way, Diodorus says that "India is inhabited by very many nations, among which the greatest of all is that of the Gangaridai against whom Alexander did not undertake an expedition, being deterred by the multitude of their elephants. This region is separated from farther India by the Ganges, the greatest river in those parts." Cuntius Curtius says that the lower Gangetic country is occupied by two nations, the Gangaridai and Prasii, whose king, Agrammes, commanded an army of almost above strength. The only difference is that Curtius refers to the number of the elephants as 3,000, whereas Diodorus gives the number as 4,000.

Plutarch says that the opposition of Alexander's army against further advance was due to the report that "The kings of Gangaridai and Prasioi were waiting for him with an army of 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 war chariots, and 6,000 fighting elephants." Plutarch assures that there is no exaggeration in the description of the army of the two nations. Pliny writes, "The tribes called Kalingæ are nearest the sea, and higher up are the Mandæi and the Malli, in whose country is mount Mallus, the boundary of all that district being the Ganges.....the final part of its course is through the country of the Gangarides. The royal city of Kalinga is called Parthalis. Over their king 60,000 foot

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1, We follow McCrindle's translations in quotations.



soldiers, 1,000 horsemen and 7,000 elephants keep watch and ward." Another alternative reading makes Gangarides-Kalinga a people, having a king, a capital city and a military force of their own.<sup>1</sup> Pliny adds that Prasii surpasses in power and glory every other power of India. Ptolemy says that all the country about the mouths of the Ganges was occupied by the Gangaridai whose capital was Gange. This city is said to have been at the junction of the Ganges leading to Mega (great) and Kamberikhon mouths respectively. The author of the 'Periplus' mentions the port Gange at the mouth of the Ganges.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from the accounts of these writers that the country of the Gangaridai was to the east of the Prasii with their capital Palibothra or Pāṭaliputra. The Ganges most probably flew into the sea, as it does at present, into many channels, the two important branches being the Hooghly and the Padma. The suggestion<sup>3</sup> that the Indian name of the country of the Gangarides is Gaṅgārāṣṭra (i. e. the country of the Ganges) seems to be near the mark. Their country seems to have comprised Burdwan, Presidency and Dacca Divisions. The power and prestige of this kingdom reached the ears of Alexander and its rise may be placed sometime earlier. It is a significant fact that no writer definitely calls Gangaridai subordinate to Prasii. Such a conclusion held by many scholars has been therefore questioned.<sup>4</sup> Late Mr. Monahan rightly observed, "It is not certain whether the two peoples at that time (of Alexander's invasion) formed one state or a confederation, but the evidence seems on the whole to point to two states with separate kings and forces, but united in a close confederation—so close that the population of both was sometimes included under one name, as Parsii or as Gangarides." It is noteworthy that Diodorus definitely calls Xandrames king of Gangaridai. This king has

1. Monahan, *The Early History of Bengal*, p. 5.

2. Schoff, 'Periplus', p. 47.

3. *IHQ*. III. p. 728 ; *Ibid*, IV, pp. 44. 234.

4. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, *The Early History of Bengal*, p. 10.



generally been identified with Mahāpadma Nanda of the Nanda dynasty, who seems to be the ruler of both the nations. It is not again certain that Candragupta Maurya, who supplanted the the Nanda dynasty from Magadha, brought Gangaridai under his authority. He is sometimes called king of Prasii but nowhere that of Gangaridai. It is clear from Pliny's account that the countries of the Gangarides and Kalingas were adjacent territories. His description of Kalingas deserves more than a passing notice. He mentions one tribe called Maccokalingæ and another called Modokalinga inhabiting an island in the Ganges. We have already referred to the fact that one interpretation of a text of Pliny makes out Gangarides-Kalinga, and from this Viven de Saint-Martin concluded that they were three branches of the Kalingas. Their country was nearest to the sea and their capital was called Parthalis which has been identified with Purvasthālī, a large village about 20 miles from the present Burdwan town.<sup>1</sup> The common ethnic character of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kalinga, Puṇḍra and Suhma has already been emphasised. It is therefore likely that a branch of the Kalingas also inhabited some part of western Bengal and were allied with the Gangarides. The great Kalinga expedition of Aśoka was perhaps meant against the powerful combination of the Kalingas and Gangarides. The huge loss of human lives and havocs of the Kalinga war, so vividly described in the Thirteenth Rock Edict, may be better explained in this way, for the subjugation of a province like modern Orissa did not possibly require so much effort of the powerful Maurya emperor.

Whatever may be the case, it seems that Bengal was brought under the Aśokan empire. Yuan Chwang saw many Aśokan topes at Puṇḍravardhana, Samatāṭa, Tāmralipti and Karnaśuvārṇa (in the Murshidabad district). This positive evidence is corroborated by the fact that while the kingdoms of the extreme south like Cola, Cera, Keralaputra and Sātiyaputra have been mentioned in the inscriptions as frontier kingdoms, no part of Bengal so near

1, IHQ, IV, p. 55,



to Pāṭaliputra has been mentioned as such. The geographer Ptolemy writing in the 2nd century A. D. refers to the country of the Gangarides, and their capital Gange<sup>1</sup> was a port of considerable importance in the first century A. D., as the evidence of the 'Periplus' shows. It is quite probable that the Gangarides cast off the Magadha yoke during the rule of the weak successors of Aśoka or after the break-up of the Maurya empire and their country continued an independent political existence at least up to the time of Ptolemy.

The history of Bengal from the fall of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas is almost dark. Ptolemy places a people called Maroundai "on the left bank of the Ganges, south of the Gogra, down to the top of the delta." But it would not be very safe to trace their extension of power so far east and south as the delta of the Ganges on the authority of Ptolemy whose geographical knowledge was often defective.<sup>2</sup> The 'Purāṇas' state that the Muṛuṇḍas will rule over large tracts of the Ganges valley.<sup>3</sup> Jaina books call Maruṇḍarāja ruler of Kānyakubja and residing in Pāṭaliputra.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese records also confirm the existence of a tribe called Meouloun (=? Muṛuṇḍas) in the Gangetic valley.<sup>5</sup> It is not easy to determine who these Muṛuṇḍas were. Sten Konow says that the word Muṛuṇḍa has been used in Kushana inscriptions in the sense of overlord.<sup>6</sup> If the words Śaka-Muṛuṇḍas of the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta should be taken to mean as two separate peoples and not as Śaka chiefs, the Muṛuṇḍas seem to be a foreign horde like the Śakas who invaded India in the early centuries of the Christian era.

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1. It has been sought to be located in the Jessore and Dacca districts (IA, 1884, p. 365) and identified with Saptagrāma in the Hooghly district (IHQ, IV, pp. 234ff). Its identification is not certain.

2. Monahan, The Early History of Bengal, pp. 8-13.

3. DUS, I, No. 2, p. 47.

4. Allan, Catalogue of Indian Coins, p. XXIX.

5. Prof. Sylvian Levy first drew attention to this, Ibid.

6. IA, XXXVII, p. 33; JASB, XIX, pp. 343ff.



According to the 'Purāṇas, Devarakṣitas ruled over Kośālas, Andhras, Paṇḍras and Tāmraliptas and countries on the sea-shore before the rise of the Guptas. Nothing is known about Devarakṣitas from any other source.<sup>1</sup>

Gupta Rule in Bengal—The establishment of Gupta authority over north-western Bengal can be traced from the time of Samudragupta. In the famous Allahabad pillar inscription we find that his 'pratyanta' (frontier) kingdoms in the east were Samatāṭa, Davāka and Kāmarūpā. The location of Davāka is uncertain,<sup>2</sup> but the positions of the other two are more or less certain. These three kingdoms also obeyed his suzerainty and paid taxes to him and they seem to have been within the spheres of his influence. The evidence of the Allahabad praśasti read along with the Damodarpur plates suggests that north-western Bengal was included within the empire of Samudragupta. The suggestion<sup>3</sup> that Candravarman of the Susunia Rock inscription is to be identified with Candravarman mentioned in that praśasti as one of the kings of Āryāvarta whose power was exterminated by Samudragupta rests on strong grounds and is perhaps to be accepted.

It is known from the Meharauli Iron pillar inscription that a king named Candra subjugated his enemies who gave a united front in Vaṅga and he also inflicted a defeat on the Bāhlikas by crossing the seven mouths of the Indus. The identification of king Candra has led to much discussion among scholars and the subject needs fresh treatment in the light of recent discoveries about the imperial Gupta history. Fleet<sup>4</sup> emphasised the early characters of this inscription but it must be observed that being a record on

1. Dr. R. C. Majumdar is of opinion that they belonged to the kingdom of Devarāṣṭra (mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta) which was situated in the Vizagapatam district. *Op. cit.* p. 13; also see DUS, I, No. 2, pp. 62-63.

2. IHQ, I, pp. 250ff.

3. PHAI, p. 364 fn. vide in fra,

4. CIL. III, pp. 139-142.



an iron pillar, it is 'sui generis' and does not bear comparison with other contemporary records. Three sets of opinions have come out of previous discussions.

(a). Mm. H. P. Shastri<sup>1</sup> expressed the opinion that Candra of the Meharauli pillar did not belong to the Gupta dynasty but was a king of Puṣkarāṇa in Rajaputana, who tried to found an all-India empire before Samudragupta. The Mandasor inscription of 404 A.D. describes Naravarman as a powerful king of Puṣkarāṇa and son of Siṃhrvarman and grandson of Jayavarman. The Susunia Rock inscription in the Bankura district of Bengal records that a wheel of Viṣṇu was set up by Candravarman, son of Siṃhavarman and king of Puṣkarāṇa. Mm. H. P. Sastri on the strength of the identity of the name Siṃhavarman of the Mandasor and Susunia inscriptions took Candravarman and Naravarman to be brothers and identified Candravarman with Candra of the Meharauli pillar. But Pokharana is the name of a place not far off from the findspot of the Susunia inscription. It may be regarded almost certain after what Mr. K. N. Dikshit has written about the ancient ruins of this place that Candravarman was the king of Pokharana (whose sanskritised form is Puṣkarāṇa) and as such he has been regarded as a local king.<sup>2</sup> It is not known whether Siṃhavarman, father of Naravarman of the Mandasor inscription, had any son of the name of Candravarman. The identification of Candravarman of the Susunia inscription with a man of unknown existence is hardly tenable and there is no definite clue whatsoever to the identification of Candravarman with Candra of the Meharauli pillar.<sup>4</sup>

1. EI. XIII. p. 133; XII. pp. 315ff. He is supported by R. D. Banerjee (EI, XIV. pp. 368-71.)

2. ASIR, 1927-28, pp. 188-9,

3. PHAI, p. 364 fn,

4. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali supports this identification by pointing out a solitary reference to one Candravarman whose Koṭa or fort formed the boundary of the land granted to a Brahmana by Samācāradeva in the 6th century A. D. (EI, XVIII p. 84). But it is very difficult to say who was this Candravarman whose fort is referred to in the inscription of Samācāradeva. He might be Candravarman of the Susunia inscription.



(b). Fleet expressed the opinion that Candra of the Meharauli pillar might be Candragupta I of the Gupta dynasty, and this has been supported by Dr. R. G. Basak and Prof. S. K. Aiyangar. Dr. Basak<sup>1</sup> accepts the identity of Simhavarman of the Susunia inscription and of the Mandasor inscription but would not concede that Candravarman came to Vaṅga on a campaign of conquests and would presume that Candravarman might have gone to the Susunia hill on a pilgrimage.<sup>2</sup> But this presumption is contradicted by Dr. Basak himself when he brings Candravarman in Bengal owing to the political vicissitudes of the Varman family of Malwa. He writes, "Simhavarman and Jayavarman might have ruled independently and when Samudragupta reduced the Malwa power, it is not unlikely that the elder brother was driven away from Malwa towards the east. This may in a way explain why he came to the Susunia hill"<sup>3</sup> Prof. S. K. Aiyangar argues the case of this identification with greater ardour<sup>4</sup> and lays down three conditions which should be satisfied in solving the controversy regarding Candra of the Meharauli pillar.

(i) The person Candra must have been a man of achievement by his own efforts, acquired a vast kingdom, and held rule over it for a length of time.

(ii) He must have fought two actions against enemies across the wide stretch of India, such as western front of Bengal and western frontier of Sindh on the western side.

(iii) The enemies thus overthrown along the western frontier of Sindh [ more properly on the other side of the Indus ] are stated to be Bālhikas.<sup>5</sup>

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1. History of North-Eastern India, p. 14.

2. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

3. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

4. JIH, VI, Studies in Gupta History, pp. 14-22 ; the Vakaṭakas and their place in Indian History, Ibid pp. 1-12.

5. Bālhikas are known as ruling in the Panjab with Sakāla (present Sialkot) as their capital (Māhābhārata, Karna-parva, Ch. 37-38 ). Varāha-Mihira mentions Bāhlikas as a northern people.



But Prof. Aiyangar has failed to cite any definite evidence and known event of Candragupta I's reign to satisfy any one of these three conditions. The Purāṇas make him rule over Magadha, Śāketa and Prāyāga.<sup>1</sup> His name is omitted from the list of imperial Gupta kings in the 'Mañjuśrī-Mū'akalpa'.<sup>2</sup> The above-mentioned three conditions are rather in complete agreement with certain events of Candragupta II's reign. To emphasise the identification of Candra of the Meharauli pillar with Candragupta I is to ignore some definitely known events of the reign of Candragupta II.

(c) The identification with Candragupta II was proposed by Hœrnle<sup>3</sup> and V. A. Smith,<sup>4</sup> but the latter gave up his own proposition and accepted Mm. H. P. Shastri's identification.<sup>5</sup> The existence of a hitherto unknown king, named Rāmagupta,<sup>6</sup> elder brother of Candragupta II, seems now to be accepted, and the drama 'Devī Candragupta' acquaints us with a hard and keen struggle between Candragupta II and the Śakas. Allan's remark<sup>7</sup> that "the enemies who had united against him (i. e. Candra of the Meharauli pillar) in the Vaṅga country were probably peoples who had taken the opportunity of his absence in the west to cast off the yoke under which his father had laid them" is applicable to Candragupta II. It seems that the paramountcy established by the arms of Samudragupta was going to be lost during the rule of Rāmagupta but was re-established by the prowess of Candragupta II. It is quite clear from the epigraphic, literary and numismatic evidence of his reign that Candragupta II came into conflict with the Śaka Satraps.

If the identification of Candra of Meharauli pillar with Candragupta II is to be accepted, it seems certain that the Vaṅgas

1. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, Intro. p. xii.

2. K. P. Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India*, sl. 645.

3. IA, XXI, p. 43.

4. JASB, 1897, pp. 1-18.

5. EHI, (4th ed.) p. 290, fn. I.

6. JBORS, XIV, pp. 223-253; Malaviya Commemoration Volume, 1932, pp. 189 ff; IC, IV, p. 216.

7. Catalogue of Indian Coins, (Gupta Dynasties) p. xxxvi. It is to be noted that Allan rejected the identification with Candragupta II.



tried to cast off the Gupta yoke but the attempt was frustrated by the valour of Candragupta II. Whoever this Candra might be, it is certain that the people of Vaṅga fought with a king who was in a position to overrun the territory between eastern Bengal and the Indus.

The Dhanaidaha, Baigram, Paharpur and five Damodarpur plates record land sales by different district (*viṣaya*) governments of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti within the period between 432 and 544 A. D. and clearly indicate that northern Bengal was under the Gupta emperors almost upto the middle of the sixth century A. D. The Dhanaidaha, Baigram and Damodarpur plates Nos. 1 and 2 of 113, 128, 124, 128 G. E. respectively fall within the reign of Kumāragupta I. In the Damodarpur plates Nos. 1 and 2 'uparika' Cīrātadatta and 'kumārāmātya' Vetravarman are mentioned as the governors of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and of the Koṭi-varṣaviṣaya respectively during the sovereignty of Kumāragupta I. The name of the emperor has not been mentioned in the Baigram plate but the date shows that it is a record of the reign of the same monarch when 'kumārāmātya' Kulavṛddhi was in charge of the Pañcanagarī-*viṣaya*.

We need not enter into the controversial question regarding the successor or successors of Kumāragupta I. Something may be said for or against the three theories viz. [i] after the death of Kumāragupta I his sons set up independent kingdoms in different parts of the empire,<sup>1</sup> [ii] he was succeeded by his son Skandagupta who was followed by his brother Puragupta and his descendants<sup>2</sup> and [iii] there were two rival lines—one represented by Skandagupta, Kumāragupta II [?] of the Saranath inscription of 154 G. E. and Budhagupta, and the other<sup>3</sup> represented by Puragupta, Narasimhagupta and Kumāragupta III [?] of the Bhitari seal inscription. Each of these theories should be regarded as

1. IA, 1918, pp. 161-67 ; JASB. 1921, pp. 249-55.

2. Dr. H. C. Roychowdhury, PHAI, pp. 386 ff.

3. Dr. R. G. Basak, History of North-Eastern India, pp. 72 ff.



tentative, and no conclusion is possible unless further light is thrown on the controversy by fresh data. No epigraphic record of the reigns of Skandagupta, Puragupta, Narasimhagupta and his son Kumāragupta II [?] has been discovered in Bengal but it is to be noted that coins of Skandagupta have been found in different districts<sup>1</sup> and coins of Narasimhagupta and Kumāragupta [II ?] have been found in the large Kalighat hoard.<sup>2</sup> The Damodarpur plates Nos. 3 and 4 mention two governors of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, Brahmadatta and Jayadatta by name, during the sovereignty of Budhagupta. The Paharpur plate of 159 G. E. does not mention the name of the emperor but it falls within his reign-period. These three plates read along with the Eran pillar inscription<sup>3</sup> and the Saranath image inscription of 157 G. E.<sup>4</sup> go to indicate that his authority was acknowledged in Central Provinces, United Provinces and Northern Bengal. Even if it is to be conceded that the Gupta empire was parcelled out among the sons of Kumāragupta I, it seems that Budhagupta ruled over a wide extent of territory and he cannot be regarded as the local ruler of Malwa and that he perhaps re-united the Gupta empire under his authority.

The Gunaighar grant of Vainyagupta,<sup>5</sup> dated in 508 A. D., raises some important problems. It was issued from the camp of victory situated at Kīpura at the request of the dependent Mahārāja Rudradatta. It records grant of land in the Gunaik-āgrahāra which is to be identified with Gunaighar, the find-spot of the plate, in the Tippera district. The dūtaka of the grant was Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja Vijayasena whose high-sounding titles

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1. One gold coin from each of the following districts, viz., from Mahanad in Hoogly, Faridpur and Midnapore and a few silver coins from Muham-madpur in Jessore. BI, p. 71 ; JASB, XXI, p. 401.

2. Allan. Catalogue of Indian Coins, Intro. p. cxxvi.

3. Fleet, CII, III, p. 88.

4. IA, 1918, p. 162,

5. IHQ. 1930, pp. 40 ff.



'pañcādhikaraṇoparikapratyuparika'<sup>1</sup> and 'puraloparika'<sup>2</sup> imply that he was a man of considerable importance in the kingdom. In this record Vainyagupta himself is styled only 'Mahārāja' and 'Paramaśaiva' and this has led Mr. D. C. Bhattacharyya to infer that he was a Gupta prince who declared independence during the troubled times of Huṇa invasions. Dr. R. C. Majumdar,<sup>3</sup> who contends that after the death of Kumāragupta I Gupta princes set up independent kingdoms in different parts of the empire, finds additional support from this record in favour of his view. Dr. D. C. Ganguli<sup>4</sup> has correctly attributed the coins with the legend 'Dvādaśāditya' on the reverse to Vainyagupta (hitherto attributed to Candragupta III), and his heavy gold coins, similar in type to those of the imperial Guptas, lead him to infer that he belonged to the same dynasty and was not a local ruler of Samatāṭa. Mention may be made of the fact that a seal of Vainyagupta with the title 'Mahārājādhirāja' has been found at Nālandā along with the seals of Budhagupta, Kumārgupta (II?) and Bhāskara-varman.<sup>5</sup> The inclusion of Vainyagupta in the imperial Gupta line means that in the first decade of the sixth century Gupta empire included Samatāṭa or a part of it, which was an outlying kingdom at the time of Samudragupta. The late Mr. R. D. Banerjee<sup>6</sup> was of opinion that even in the Gupta period Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti comprised some part of eastern Bengal as in the Pāla and Sena periods.

Unfortunately the name of the Gupta emperor in the Damodarpur plate No. 5 is lost. Dr. R. G. Basak suggested the name to be (Bhānu?) gupta.<sup>7</sup> We are rather inclined to

1. Mr. D. C. Bhattacharyya renders it as "President of five (district) court judges." Ibid.

2. Rendered by the same scholar as "President of city Governors." Ibid.

3. IHQ, IX, pp. 989ff.

4. Ibid, pp. 784ff; x, pp. 154ff.

5. ASIR, 1930-34, p. 280.

6. BI, p. 63.

7. EI, XV, p. 144; Jayaswal thinks him to be Kumāragupta III, Imperial History of India, p. 67.



to identify him with Viṣṇugupta, a large number of whose coins have been found in the Kalighat hoard with the legend on the reverse reading 'Candrāditya'.<sup>1</sup> If this is to be accepted, Viṣṇugupta seems to be the last known Gupta king of Bengal. The title of the governor of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti in this plate is 'Mahārājaputra-rājaputradeva-bhaṭṭāraka and his name seems to be lost, though it is not unlikely that his name was Rājaputradeva. The epithets 'Mahārājaputra' and 'Bhaṭṭāraka' perhaps imply that he was a prince of the royal blood. Yuan Chwang and the 'Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa'<sup>2</sup> state that the Huṇa chief Toramāna was captured in the marshy land in the east and Gauḍa. It seems that when western provinces were passing into the hands of the Huṇas and Yaśodharman was rising in Malwa, the last stronghold of the Guptas was Bengal. The proud boast of the court-poet that Yaśodharman's songs of victories resound on the bank of the Lauhitya<sup>3</sup> perhaps refers to his fight with a Gupta king in Bengal.

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1. Allan Op. Cit., pp. 141-46.

2. Jayaswal, Op. Cit. p. 64.

3. Fleet, CII, III, Nos. 33-35,



## CHAPTER II

### From the Fall of the Guptas to the Rise of the Palas

The Gupta empire finally broke up about the middle of the sixth century and there arose independent dynasties like the Maitrakas of Vallabhī, the Maukharis and the Later Guptas in different parts of the empire. The four Faridpur plates acquaint us with the names of three Mahārājādhirājas, viz., Gopacandra, Dharmāditya and Samācāradeva, who seem to have been, as Dr. N. K. Bhattasali<sup>1</sup> points out, "related to one another and formed a dynasty." After the publication of the Mallasarula plate of Mahārāja Vijayasena<sup>2</sup> it cannot perhaps be maintained that the kings of the Faridpur plates (at least Gopacandra) were rulers of eastern Bengal only. Palæographically these five plates belong to the same period, i. e., the sixth century A. D. Though two letters just after the name 'Gopa' are lost in the new plate, Mahārājādhirāja Gopa is perhaps to be identified with Gopacandra of the Faridpur plate C of Pargiter. The existence of two Mahārājādhirājas with the same name in the same period is hardly a tenable proposition in the absence of some positive proof. By this plate land transaction was made in the Vardhamāna-bhukti which, roughly speaking, comprised modern Burdwan Division. Further, if the identification of Mahārāja Vijayasena of this record with the Mahārāja of the same name of the Gunaighar grant is to be accepted, the chronological order of the kings of the Faridpur plates, as worked out by Pargiter<sup>3</sup> after careful palæographical examinations, needs be changed. In that case Gopacandra seems to have preceded Dharmāditya, unless the vassal king Vijayasena lived an unusually long life to serve three kings, Vainyagupta

1. EI, VIII, p. 84

2. SPP, 1344 B, s., pp. 17 ff.

3. IA, 1910, pp. 193 ff.



Dharmāditya and Gopacandra, if not more others. If the identification is to be accepted, it seems that Gupta authority in Bengal was supplanted by Gopacandra.

The invasions of Bengal by the Maukhari king *Isānavarman* and the *Cālukya* king *Kirtivarman I* most probably took place during the reigns of the three kings of the Faridpur plates. The *Haraha* inscription<sup>1</sup> of 554 A. D. records that the *Gauḍas* were compelled by *Isānavarman* to take shelter on the sea shore. The *Mahakuta* inscription,<sup>2</sup> dated in 602 A. D., states that *Kirtivarman I*, son of *Fulakeśin I*, defeated the kings of *Aṅga*, *Vaṅga* and *Kaliṅga*. No other event of the reigns of *Gopacandra*, *Dharmāditya* and *Samācāradeva* is known. Their rise as well as fall remains shrouded in mystery. Two coins in the Indian Museum with the legend '*Narendrāditya*' on the reverse may be attributed to *Samācāradeva*, as the reading of the legend '*Samāca*' on the obverse appears to be almost certain.<sup>3</sup>

The chronological position of *Mahārājādhirāja Jayanāga* of the *Vappagoṣavaṭa* grant is not very easy to determine. The alphabets seem to be earlier than those used in the *Ganjam* plate of *Mādhavarāja* of 619 A. D. and in the *Nidhanpur* plates of *Bhaskarvarman*. It is for the upright character of the letters used in *Vappagoṣavaṭa* grant that *Dr. R. G. Bāsak*<sup>4</sup> is inclined to place *Jayanāga* before *Śaśāṅka*. But it must be noted that the '*Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa*' places *Jayanāga* immediately after *Śaśāṅka*. It is difficult to say anything definitely on the chronological position of these two kings from palæographical consideration, as the interval between them appears to be very short. The *Vappagoṣavaṭa* grant was issued from *Karṇasuvarṇa* and records grant of land to *Bhaṭṭa Brahmanavīrasvāmin* by *Sāmanta Nārāyaṇabhadra* who was in charge of the *Audumbarika-viṣaya* which has been identified with

1. EI, XIV, pp. 110 ff.

2. IA, XIX, p. 16.

3. EI, XVIII, pp. 79-80 ; Allan, Op. Cit. pp. 149-50.

4. History of North-Eastern India, p. 189.



Audumbar pargana in the Murshidabad district.<sup>1</sup> The coins with the legend 'Jaya' on the obverse and 'Prakāṇḍayaśaḥ' on the reverse may be attributed to Jayanāga.<sup>2</sup>

ŚAŚĀṆKA—Śaśāṅka played an important rôle in the history of north-eastern India in the first half of the seventh century. His activities are known in some details from contemporary sources. Bāṇabhatta calls him king of Gauḍa and Yuan Chwang refers to him as ruler of Karṇasuvarṇa which has been identified with Rangamati in the Murshidabad district.<sup>3</sup>

(Some scholars attempt to show Śaśāṅka's connection with the Guptas. Bühler noticed in one of the Mss. of the 'Harṣacarita' the name of the king of Gauḍa as Narendragupta.<sup>4</sup> Dr. R. G. Basak<sup>5</sup> is of opinion that the word 'Narendra' has been used by Bāṇa under the garb of a pun to refer to Śaśāṅka. The same provenance and the similar style of the coins of Śaśāṅka with those of the Guptas led R. D. Banerjee<sup>6</sup> to go so far as to assert that he was a son or nephew of Mahāsenagupta. All that can be said is that he seems to have 'Narendra' as his 'virtūda' but there is no positive evidence to prove his Gupta lineage. But if Gupta heredity cannot be claimed for him, his heritage was the Gupta imperial tradition which he tried to emulate.

The Rotasgarh seal matrix<sup>7</sup> found in the Shahabad district of Bihar bears an inscription reading "Śrī-mahāsāmanta-śaśāṅka-devasya" [of the illustrious Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅkadeva]. For palaeographical reasons this Mahāsāmanta is to be identified with Śaśāṅka, the rival of Harṣavardhana. The testimony of the Rotasgarh seal-matrix is so great a commentary on his early life that its significance cannot be ignored. To all intents and purposes, it appears that Śaśāṅka began his career as a subordinate chief. The question of finding out the overlord whom he served in his early life is not very easy. The Haraha inscription of Išāna-

1. EI, XIX, p. 286,

2. Allan, Op. Cit, pp. 150-51,

3. EI, I, p. 70,

4. Op, cit, p. 138.

5. BI, p. 105,

6. CII, III, p. 284,



varman of 554 A. D. and the Deobaranark inscription<sup>1</sup> of Jivitagupta II indicate the suzerainty of the Maukhari kings Iśānavarman, Sarvavarman and Avantivarman over Bihar. The latter record clearly shows that the authority of Sarvavarman and Avantivarman was acknowledged in the Shahabad district. This would indicate that Śaśāṅka was a feudatory of the Maukharis. But it is known from the Apshad inscription of Ādityasena<sup>2</sup> that his grandfather Mahāsenagupta described by Bāṇa as king of Mālava defeated Susthitavarman on the bank of the Lauhitya, who is to be identified with the king of Kāmarūpa of that name. Mahāsenagupta's son Mādhavagupta, Susthitavarman's son Bhāskaravarman and Harṣavardhana were contemporaries. Therefore Mahāsenagupta fought with the Kāmarūpa king during the close of the sixth or during the opening years of the seventh century A. D.. Śaśāṅka might have been a feudatory of Mahāsenagupta in the train of whose invasion he came. This may in a way also explain the Rotsgrah seal-matrix of Śaśāṅka.

But the chief sphere of his activities was Gauḍa, as it is clear from Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Yuan Chwang. It is not known how he made himself master of Gauḍa. If Jayanāga preceded him, most probably Śaśāṅka established himself at Karṇasuvarṇa by ousting him or his descendants. At the time of his siege of Kanouj after the death of the Maukhari king Grahavarman and before the accession of Harṣavardhana, Śaśāṅka must have made himself independent and held Gauḍa and Magadha under him. His supremacy over Orissa, which is proved by the Ganjam plates<sup>3</sup> of Mādhavarāja II, dated in 619 A.D., might have been established before his rupture with the Puṣyabhutis of Thāṇeśvara, by defeating Śambhūya of Patiakella grant, dated in 602 A.D. The prophetic statement in the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa<sup>4</sup> that king Soma (Śaśāṅka) will rule

1. Ibid, p. 218

2. Ibid, No. 42 ; IHQ, XII, p. 457.

3. EI, VI, p. 143 ; IHQ, XII, pp. 459 ff. also EI, XXIII, pp. 197ff,

4. Imperial History of India, p. 49-50, §1. 715-16.



over the Gangetic valley up to Benares may be taken as implying the north-western boundary of his kingdom in the normal circumstances. According to Yuan Chwang<sup>1</sup>, his influence was felt in Kuśinagara. Śaśāṅka seems to have brought under him the whole of eastern India excepting perhaps Kāmarūpa and Vaṅga. Śaśāṅka's rising importance in the political arena of northern India is also clear from Bāṇa<sup>2</sup> who refers to Śaśāṅkamaṇḍala in describing the meeting of Rājya and Harṣa after former's return from the battle with the Huṇas during the life-time of Prabhākaravardhana.

The use of the word 'Maṇḍala' in this connection is very significant, and if it is to be interpreted in the light of the 'Artha-Śāstra',<sup>3</sup> it would mean the circle of states headed by Śaśāṅka. In any case, it means the rising importance of this king in the political horizon even before the death of Prabhākaravardhana. (This would strengthen the view that there was an alliance between Śaśāṅka and the Mālava king<sup>4</sup> against the Maukharis and the Puṣyabhutis. If there was any connection between the Mālava king Mahāsenagupta and him in his early career, the almost simultaneous marches of a Mālava king and of Śaśāṅka indicate something like a joint operation, which was not perhaps accidental. But the important point against this view is that in the 'Harṣacarita' Rājyavardhana received the news of the death of the Kanauj king Grahavarman, his brother-in-law, caused by the Mālava king who was advancing towards Thāneśvara, and he at once started with 10,000 horsemen to meet the enemy. The only enemy that he knew of at that time

1. Watters, II, p. 43.

2. Harṣacarita, Ch. VI.

3. Kauṭilya, Bk. VII, Ch. II.

4. As regards the identity of this Mālava king, scholars so long took him to be Devagupta who has been mentioned as one of the kings defeated by Rājyavardhana (Madhuvan inscription, EI, VI, 210). Recently Dr. D. C. Ganguli has expressed the opinion that the Mālava king was Kalacuri Budharāja, son of Saṅkaragaṇa. There is no doubt that these two kings were in possession of Ujjayinī and western Mālava. But it may be that Devagupta was a king of eastern Mālava (EI, IX, p. 285 ; JBORS, XIX. pp. 405 ff ; IHQ, XII, p. 461).



was the Mālava king and Bāṇabhaṭṭa does not at all allude to the activities of Śaśāṅka. The next news from Kanouj was that though the Mālava army had been easily routed, Rājyavardhana "was allured to confidence by false civilities on the part of the king of Gauḍa, and then weaponless, confiding, and alone, despatched in his own quarters". It is also clear from the 'Harṣacarita' that Rājyavardhana found Kanouj besieged by Śaśāṅka, as the Gauḍa trouble has been definitely mentioned by Bāṇa. (The march of Śaśāṅka on Kanouj from Karnasuvarṇa must have taken a long time, and if there was a concerted action, it seems that the Mālava king was earlier to arrive at the scene of action and did not wait for his ally. But it must also be said that the court of Thāṇeśvara was unaware of any such joint action, and Rājyavardhana after defeating the Mālava army sent the trusted general Bhaṇḍī with the booty and a part of his army and himself proceeded towards Kanouj without any knowledge of the impending danger from the Gauḍa king. This would indicate that the actions of Śaśāṅka and Mālava king were not connected in any way.

The Śaśāṅka-Rājyavardhana episode has been discussed by many scholars and two sets of opinions have come out of previous discussions. Mr. C. V. Vaidya<sup>1</sup>, Dr. R. G. Basak<sup>2</sup> and Dr. D. C. Ganguli<sup>3</sup> accept the statement of Bāṇa (mentioned above), who further says<sup>4</sup> that the death of Rājyavardhana was due to carelessness on his part. In this connection he cites the examples of some careless kings of ancient times and their dealings with women. These scholars find corroboration of Bāṇa, when Saṅkara, one of the commentators of the 'Harṣacarita' in the fourteenth century, explains those passages by introducing Śaśāṅka's marriage proposal of his daughter to Rājyavardhana and says that he was murdered, while enjoying a feast in the former's camp. Further corroboration is to be found, in their opinion, in Yuan Chwang's account

1. Medieval India, I, p. 4.

2. History of North-Eastern India, pp. 144-50.

3. IHQ, XII, pp. 462-64.

4. Cowell, Eng. Trans. of Harṣacarita, p. 192.



and Harṣavardhana's inscription. The Chinese pilgrim records, "Śaśāṅka addressed his ministers in these words,<sup>1</sup> 'If a frontier country has a virtuous ruler, this is the unhappiness of the mother kingdom.' On this they asked the king to a conference and murdered him." Harṣavardhana's inscription<sup>2</sup> records that "he gave up his life in his enemy's house, owing to his adherence to his promise (satyānurodhena)".

† Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda, R. D. Banerjee and Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>3</sup> are of opinion that both Bāṇa and Yuan Chwang were biased against Śaśāṅka who was the adversary of their patron Harṣavardhana, and therefore much reliance cannot be placed on their accounts in this particular matter. Rājyavardhana had a small army with him after his fight with the Mā'ava king and was defeated in a fair fight and there was nothing unfair in his death. It may be said in support of their view that there is some force in their argument. Bāṇa does not refer to Śaśāṅka in very honourable terms when he calls him 'vile Gauḍa' ('Gauḍādharma') or the serpent of Gauḍa' (Gauḍa-bhujaṅga). It is not known what was the source of information of the commentator Saṅkara's reference to the marriage proposal. If the remarks of Bāṇa on Śaśāṅka are to be doubted, the veracity of the commentator to explain them by referring to a marriage proposal in an abnormal circumstance can be further questioned. \d

A mystery hangs over this episode and it is rather difficult to be definite. (It is clear that Śaśāṅka must have marched on Kanauj at the head of a large army and there is nothing to show that he went with the intention of staging a marriage ceremony of his daughter (at least there is no scent of it in the 'Harṣacarita' and Yuan Chwang's accounts). We would rather suggest that the death of Rājyavardhana is to be sought in the rash and hasty policy pursued or in his 'carelessness', as Bāṇa puts it. He was not

1, Beal, Records, pp. 210-211 ; Watters, I, p. 343 ; Life, p. 83,

2, BI, VI p. 210,

3, Gauḍarājamañjā, pp. 8-10 ; Early Hist. of Beng. pp. 17-18 ; BI, p. 107,



aware of Śaśāṅka's plan and most probably unprepared to fight with him, which would have meant defeat, and therefore agreed or was forced to meet the Gauḍa king in a 'conference', as Yuan Chwang reports. What happened in that conference is not known but he was perhaps asked to give up the Maukhari alliance, which he could not do, confirmed as it was by the marriage of his sister Rājyaśrī with the Maukhari king Grahavarman. After the death of the Maukhari king he also could not put back the claim of his sister to the throne of Kanouj. This perhaps brought about his death, which has been described in Harṣavardhana's inscription as "due to adherence to his promise." The political union of Thāneśvar and Kanouj was certainly a dread to a king who aspired after the overlordship of northern India and the campaign of Śaśāṅka was undertaken with that object in view. This may also in a way explain why Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Yuan Chwang could not specifically mention the cause of Rājyavardhana's death, for it would not reflect any credit on his political sagacity and wisdom, and they have referred to it as due to carelessness and murder in a conference.

What happened after the death of Rājyavardhana is not known<sup>1</sup> and why Śaśāṅka retired from Kanouj cannot be explained. The news of the death of his brother enraged Harṣavardhana and the Thāneśvara court. He prepared himself with a large army to

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1. Dr. D. C. Ganguli is inclined to identify the noble man of the name Gupta with Devagupta who, according to him, occupied Kauouj, Śaśāṅka was between the two enemies and got out of the critical situation by murdering Rājyavardhana in an unfair way. But Dr. Ganguli does not explain who this Devagupta was and how he occupied Kanouj. It is also to be noted that then Śaśāṅka had to fight with Devagupta after Rājyavardhana's death. There is nothing to indicate that Śaśāṅka fought with Davagūpta. The Mālava army was routed by Rājyavardhana after whose death Devagupta, (whom we have suggested to be a ruler of eastern Mālava) and Śaśāṅka were perhaps in possession of Kanouj, if there was an alliance between them. It should also be said there is no strong reason to identify the noble man of the Gupta family with Devagupta. He might have been an officer under the Gauḍa king under whose orders Rājyaśrī was released from prison.



fight with Śaśaṅka with the vow "unless in a limited number of days I clear this earth of the Gauḍas, and make it resound with fetters on the feet of all kings who are excited to insolence by the elasticity of their vows, then will I hurl my sinful self, like a moth, into an oil-fed flame." He ordered Bhaṇḍī to advance as he himself had to search for his sister. After the rescue of his sister from the Vindhya forest we find him receiving an envoy of the Kāmarūpa king. A close study of the 'Harṣacarita' reveals the fact that Harṣa like Rājya did not hastily proceed against Śaśaṅka. In spite of the grandiloquent description of the vows of revenge, calumniation and fulminations of the court of Thāneśvara it is clear that Harṣa first consulted the trusted counsellors and veterans of war. Though it is difficult to say at whose initiative the alliance with Kāmarūpa took place, it is clear from the manner in which Haṁsavega, the Kāmarūpa envoy, was presented before Harṣa and from the discussions between the two parties that the latter was no less eager than the other side to form this 'entente', as both were in dread of the aggressive policy of the Gauḍa monarch.

The late Mr. R. D. Bauerjee<sup>1</sup> was of opinion that Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman occupied Karṇasuvarṇa by defeating Śaśaṅka immediately after which he retired to Ganjam. But the Ganjam plate of 619 A. D. rather shows that Śaśaṅka was in full enjoyment of his imperial power upto that date. We are rather inclined to accept the opinion of Dr. D. C. Ganguli<sup>2</sup> that Harṣa had to undertake two campaigns against Gauḍa. In his first campaign during the life-time of Śaśaṅka he could not achieve anything tangible. Bāṇa is silent on the result of this campaign against the Gauḍa king, though he refers to his conquest of Sindh and the Himalayan countries.<sup>3</sup> Yuan Chwang says that after the anti-Budhistic activities of Śaśaṅka in Magadha Purnavarman, the last descendant of Aśoka, was on the throne of Magadha. The pilgrim

1. History of Orissa, I, p. 129.

2. IHQ, XII, pp. 465-67.

3. Cowell, Op. Cit. p. 76.



visited Magadha for the first time in 637 A. D. and refers to Śaśāṅka as a recent king.<sup>1</sup> All these go to show that the Gauḍa king could successfully hold himself against Harṣa. But in another connection he reports<sup>2</sup> that "Śilāditya held his court here (Kajangala), cut grass to make huts and burned these when leaving." If the author of the "Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa" is to be believed, Harṣa even advanced upto Puṇḍra, to the great distress of the people. This seems to have happened on the occasion of another campaign in the east, otherwise this cannot be satisfactorily reconciled with the evidence of the Ganjam plate and the account of Yuan Chwang. It must also be noted that nothing is known of Śaśāṅka after 619 A. D. excepting that Yuan Chwang refers to him as a recent king in 638 A. D. It is also clear from the pilgrim's account that he died a natural death.

The bull symbol of his coins shows that Śaśāṅka was a Śaiva. Both Yuan Chwang and the author of the "Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa"<sup>3</sup> are vehement in their accusation of persecution of the Buddhists by this king. The Chinese pilgrim says that Harṣa got an oracle from the image of a Bodhisattva to the effect that he should accept the throne to save Buddhism from the ruin brought about by Śaśāṅka. But Bāṇa would make us believe that Harṣa consented to ascend the throne only to avenge the foul murder of Rājya by the Gauḍa king. Speaking of Kuśinagara, the pilgrim reports that the groups of the brethren were broken up. Further, he is said to have cut the Bodhi Tree, destroyed its roots down to the water and burnt what remained. He also destroyed the foot-prints of Buddha at Pāṭaliputra. These are the specific charges mentioned by Yuan Chwang, and for his anti-Buddhistic activities he had to die a very miserable death and was even taken to task in hell. But when speaking of Puṇḍravardhana, Kāṇasavarṇa and Tāmralipti and other places of Magadha which were also included in his dominion, Yuan Chwang does not refer to any oppression and

1. Ibid, p. 183.

2. Watters. II, p. 115.

3. Op. Cit.



finds Buddhism in flourishing condition. If there would have been a wholesale persecution, there is no reason why the Buddhists of Bôdh-Gaya and Kuśinagara were singled out. Rai Bahadur R. P. Chanda and R. D. Banerjee<sup>1</sup> expressed the opinion that most probably the Buddhists of those places conspired against Śaśāṅka and had sympathy with Harṣavardhana who was after all a pro-Buddhist king. These two scholars therefore hold that the motive behind the persecution was rather political necessity than religious conviction. Similar cases are not wanting in Indian history. When describing Hiranaparvata<sup>2</sup> (near Mongyr), Yuan Chwang says that in recent times the king of a neighbouring country had deposed the ruler and given the capital to the Buddhist brethren. It is not known why the ruling king was deposed and who was the deposer. But the very fact that the capital was given to the Buddhist brethren rouses a suspicion of conspiracy by the Buddhists with the neighbouring king against the ruler of the locality. In 1581 A. D. during the reign of Akbar<sup>3</sup> mosques of Bēṅgāl and Guzrat became centres of political meetings and Akbar was even declared deposed. There was no other way but to close the mosques and even in some cases they were demolished. These extreme measures were regarded by the orthodox Mussalmans of his time as anti-Islamic and nothing more than that. In reality, political necessity compelled Akbar to take these measures. The real motive behind the anti-Buddhistic activities of Śaśāṅka cannot be judged, until we know of them from other sources. To Yuan Chwang all these were sacrilegious and the 'Mañjusrī-Mūlakalpa' is an out-and-out Buddhist book in which everything has been put in the mouth of Lord Buddha in the form of prophecy.

Such in outline is the career and reign of Śaśāṅka. The details are still lacking. But in spite of the charge of treacherous murder of Rājyavardhana and accusation of the persecution of the

1. Gauḍarājamālā, pp. 11-13; BI, p. 110

2. Watters, II, p. 178

3. V. A. Smith, Oxford History of India, p. 358



Buddhists, he was no less a dazzling and important figure than his great rival Harṣa. It is clear that his account comes from the manifestly hostile camp. The key-note to his character was the ambition of founding an empire and he succeeded considerably in realising it at first, but his plan was upset by a combination of Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman.

The Period of Anarchy—Yuan Chwang visited five principalities of Bengal viz., Kajangala (north-eastern part of Santal parganas and Rajmahal), Puṇḍravardhana, Samatāṭa, Karṇasuvarṇa and Tāmralipti. He does not refer to any ruling kings and to their political status. From this it has been concluded by some writers that Bengal formed a part of Harṣa's empire. But the view that Bengal was under the Kāmarūpa king Bhāskaravarman seems to rest on a stronger basis. The land granted by the Nidhanpur plates has been definitely located in Pañcakhaṇḍa in the Sylhet district.<sup>1</sup> These plates were issued from the camp of victory situated at Karṇasuvarṇa. Bhāskaravarman has been called the king of 'eastern India' and he promised safe conduct to the pilgrim up to Tāmralipti.<sup>2</sup> All these point to the establishment of his authority over Bengal. This seems to be more reasonable than the other view which rests on the general statement of Yuan Chwang that Harṣa conquered five Indies.<sup>3</sup> Whoever might have exercised suzerainty, it seems clear that after the death of Śaśāṅka his kingdom was divided into many petty principalities.

1. JASB, 1935, pp. 419 ff.

2. IC, II, p. 38 ; IA, 1880, p. 20 ; IHQ, XII, p. 73 ; Beal, Life, p. 188.

3. Scholars differ as to the time of the occupation of Karṇasuvarṇa by Bhāskaravarman. Dr. Basak holds that Harṣa conquered Karṇasuvarṇa with his help and handed it over to him. R. D. Banerjee expressed the opinion that Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman occupied the capital of Śaśāṅka by joint operation. Dr. Majumdar is of opinion that Bhāskaravarman occupied Karṇasuvarṇa after the death of Harṣa in 647 A. D. who would not have allowed his ally to be dangerously powerful (see History of North-Eastern India, pp. 153, 227 ; History of Orissa, I, p. 122 ; Early History of Bengal, p. 20)



The Tippera grant of Lokanātha is to be palæographically assigned to the seventh century.<sup>1</sup> This record introduces us to a Nātha family who ruled as feudatories<sup>2</sup> for three generations before Lokanātha. The first member of the family is called 'Ādi-Mahārāja but his name is lost. His son was Śrīnātha whose son Bhavanātha was of religious temperament and took to ascetic life. Lokanātha was placed in charge of administration but it is not clear whether he was the son or brother's son of Bhavanātha. Verses 7-9 describe the exploits and achievements of Lokanātha. The army of the 'Parameśvara' (his suzerain) met with discomfiture repeatedly at his hands. He fought a successful fight against one Jayatuṅgavarṣa who seems to be a local chief like Lokanātha himself but cannot be identified. Another chief named Jīva-dharaṇa is said to have given up hostilities against Lokanātha in consideration of his success against Jayatuṅgavarṣa, his confirmation by a royal charter (most probably by the suzerain) and the love and affection of his subjects towards him. Jīva-dharaṇa followed the principle that prudence is the better part of valour, as there was perhaps very little chance of success against Lokanātha, but the composer of the praśasti in a clever way eulogised his patron by putting everything through the mouth of the adversary of Lokanātha. The land granted by the Tippera plate was situated in the Suvvaṅga-viṣaya which cannot be located and it may be provisionally held that this family ruled in Tippera or in a neighbouring locality.

1. The plate bears a date. Dr. Basak read it as 44 at first. But just before the letters signifying 44 the word 'adhika' occurs. Prof. Bhandarkar suggested that the date is 144 and Dr. Basak now reads 344 and refers it to the Gupta era. We are inclined to accept this and this would place it in 663-4 A.D.

2. The seal attached to the plate bears an inscription reading 'kumārāmātya' but it is written in early Gupta script. Dr. Thomas concluded that it "was issued from the office of the 'kumārāmātya' of Lokanātha's overlord and only countersigned by Lokanātha." (II, xv, p. 803 fn). But Dr. Basak maintains that the opening words 'kumārāmātya' in prose portions refers to the feudatory chief Lokanātha himself. The fact remains that Lokanātha and his ancestors were feudatories. (History of North-Eastern India, p. 95).



The Asrafpur plates of the Khaḍgas and the Deulbadi Sarvāṇī image inscription of Queen Prabhāvatī supply the information about another dynasty ruling over at least some portion of Dacca and Tippera districts. These records have been palæographically examined by the present writer<sup>1</sup> in details, and it has been shown that the alphabets represent an earlier variety than those used in the Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla. The Khaḍgas ruled for four generations and therefore can be assigned to the period between 625-725 A. D.<sup>2</sup> The Asrafpur plates were issued from Karmāntavāsaka which has been identified with Baḍkamta in the Tippera district.<sup>3</sup> The first known member of the family is Khaḍgodyama who has been described in the Deulbadi inscription as 'nṛpādhirāja' and as a great conqueror. It may be that the family rose into political importance under him. His son Jātakhaḍga is said to have defeated his enemies whose son Devakhaḍga donated land to the Buddhist monastery of Saṃghamitra for the longevity of his son Rājarājabhaṭa. The prince after his accession confirmed the grant and is to be identified with Rājabhaṭa, the devout Buddhist king of Samataṭa, who was highly spoken of by the Chinese traveller Sen-chi during his visit towards the close of the seventh century. The fact that the name Khaḍga sounds un-Indian and that a caste of that name can be traced in Nepal in the 14th century led Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>4</sup> to presume "that the Khaḍga dynasty came to eastern Bengal in the trains of the Tibetans and the Nepalese during the troublesome days that followed the death of Harṣavardhana."

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1. DUS, I, No. p 54.

2. Dr. Basak rightly says that the first symbol of the two letters signifying the year of the second Asrafpur plate remains a puzzle and cannot be satisfactorily explained unless we agree with Dr. Majumdar to read it as 73 or 79 by following Bendall's chart of numerical symbols. 'History of North-Eastern India,' p. 203 ; JASB 1929, pp. 375ff.

3. EI, XVII, pp. 357ff.

4. Early History of Bengal, p. 124



But it must be said that there is no proof to connect the Khaḍga dynasty with Nepal.

In the Tippiṛa plate there is a reference to Lokanātha's defiance of the authority of the suzerain whose army was many times defeated by this feudatory chief. In the second Asraṣpur plate there is a reference to the 'Bṛhatparameśvara' and the highest officials whom the Khaḍgas could command were the 'viṣayapatis'. From these it appears that Samataṭa in the latter half of the seventh century was divided into many principalities under a suzerain power. The dynasty which exercised overlordship over Samataṭa is not known. It has been asserted that Bengal was under Kāmarūpa kings from Bhāskaravarman's occupation of Karnaśuvarṇa to the time of Harṣa of the Bhagadatta dynasty, who has been described as the lord of Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṅga and Kośala in the Pasupati temple inscription of 759 A. D.<sup>1</sup> It may be argued that the Later Guptas from the reign of Ādityasena exercised overlordship over some portion of Bengal, as it is clear from the Apsadh (Gaya district) Shahpur (Patna district) and Mandar (Bhagalpur district) inscriptions that there was a great revival of his power in north-eastern India.<sup>2</sup>

While eastern Bengal was parcelled into many small principalities fighting among themselves and setting at naught the shadowy authority of the overlord, the condition of Gauḍa was perhaps not better in any way. The 'Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa'<sup>3</sup> correctly records that after the reign of Śaśaṅka the 'Gauḍatantra' (system) was paralysed. It refers to many kings of Gauḍa most of whom are mentioned by initials only and therefore they cannot be identified, as they are otherwise unknown. What deserves particular notice is that the reigns of most of them lasted for months and days and not even a year. During the reign of one king named Śiśu it

1. IC, II, pp37-45.

2. IHQ, XII, p. 74 ; History of North-Eastern India, pp. 125-26.

3. Imperial History of India, sl. 735-58.



is said that the influence of women would be felt and he would rule for a fortnight and then would be killed. To crown the misery of the people, it is predicted that a severe famine would visit the eastern country. This certainly points to the absence of any stable government in Gauḍa. Might was right and there was disorder and anarchy, and this is just the state of things which has been very appropriately described in the Khalimpur plate of Dhamapāla as 'matsyanyāya'. By this significant term the ancient writers used to express the extreme state of anarchy and chaos. Tārānātha describes the condition of Bengal just before the election of Gopāla in the following way, "There was no longer any member of it (the royal family of the Candras) a king ; in Oḍiṣa, in Bengal and the other provinces to the east, each Kṣatriya, Brahman, and merchant constituted himself king of his surroundings, but there was no king ruling the country."<sup>1</sup>

The weakness of the political power of Gauḍa naturally invited many foreign invasions by neighbouring powerful potentates. Three or four invasions of this period are definitely known. It is stated in the Ragholi plates that a king of Śailavarmśa killed the king of Puṇḍra. The first known member of the family is Śrīvardhana I and his son Pṛthuvardhana attacked Guzrat. In that family was born Sauvardhana (his exact relationship with Pṛthuvardhana is not known). Three sons of Sauvardhana played havoc on three kingdoms. One killed the king of Puṇḍra. Another conquered the king of Kāśī and Jayavardhana I defeated the king of Vindhyā. His son was Śrīvardhana II, and his grandson, Jayavardhana II, who was the donor of the grant and is to be assigned in the last part of the eighth century A. D. Therefore, Jayavardhana I and his brothers may be placed in the first part of the eighth or in the last part of the seventh century. It was in this period that the king of Puṇḍra was killed. It is not known whether the unnamed Śaila prince established himself on the throne of northern Bengal.

2. IA, IV, pp. 365-66.



Vākpati in his 'Gauḍa-vaho' narrates the defeat and slaughter of the king of Gauḍa by his patron Yaśovarman of Kanouj. The important point to notice in that book is that the king of Gauḍa has been called 'Magadhanātha'<sup>1</sup> also. This shows that in the second quarter of the eighth century Gauḍa and Magadha were politically united. Vākpati further informs that Yaśovarman defeated the king of Vaṅga. Most probably Magadha was annexed to the dominion of the Kanouj king. The Nālandā inscription<sup>2</sup> of Mālaḍa, a son of the minister of Yaśovarman, records some gifts to the temple of Balāditya at that famous monastery there. Even during the time of Devapāla there was a town called Yaśovarmapur in Bihar.

But the Kanouj king could not long enjoy the fruits of his victory as he was defeated by the Kāśmīra king Lalitāditya,<sup>3</sup> and Kalhaṇa says that in course of his 'digvijaya' the Kāśmīra king reached the sea-shore. But it is doubtful whether Lalitāditya conquered Bengal. We are told that after the defeat of Yaśovarman Lalitāditya's army proceeded with ease to the eastern ocean and reached Kalinga. Numerous elephants joined him from the Gauḍa country, as if attracted by friendship for their comrades.<sup>4</sup> This rather implies friendly assistance by the Gauḍa king to Lalitāditya in his Kalinga expedition. The poet narrates a heroic episode connecting the Kāśmīra king and an unnamed Gauḍa king and a band of thirty loyal followers and it may be that there is some historical truth in this episode, though it does not prove definitely the authority of Lalitāditya over

1. Dr. R. C. Majumdar points out that Yaśovarman first met his eastern enemy near the Vindhyās and this he explains by suggesting that a branch of the Śaīla family which ruled over northern Bengal had settled itself in the Vindhyā region and the Gauḍa king who added Magadha to his dominions sided with his kinsmen. (Early History of Bengal, p. 25.). The defeated king of Gauḍa may be also identified with Jivitagupta II of the Later Gupta dynasty.

2. EI, XX, p. 87.

3. Rājataranginī, IV, 144.

4. Ibid, IV, vs. 146-48.



Gauḍa. The Gauḍa king visited Kāśmīra on his request and on the promise of safety of his own person in Kāśmīra, the image of Viṣṇu Parihāsakeśava being made surety of Lalitāditya's faith. But the Gauḍa king was treacherously murdered by Lalitāditya. Thirty loyal and brave followers of the Gauḍa king went to Kāśmīra on the pretext of pilgrimage and had their revenge fulfilled by breaking the idol of Viṣṇu Rāmasvāmin which they mistook for that of Parihāsakeśava. They fought bravely when the army came from the capital and died a glorious and heroic death. Kalhana<sup>1</sup> exclaims, "Even the creator cannot achieve what the Gauḍas did on that occasion. Even to this day the temple of Rāmasvāmin is empty, whereas the whole world is filled with the fame of Gauḍa heroes." The fact that Kalhana pays so eloquent a tribute to the Gauḍa heroes because of the great impression it produced in the eighth century indicates that there was some truth in this episode. The story of Jayapīḍa's stay in disguise at the house of a courtesan in the city of Puṇḍravardhana, the revelation of his identity on his killing a fierce lion, his marriage with Kalyāṇadevī, daughter of the Gauḍa king Jayanta, and his conquest of Pañca-Gauḍas for his father-in-law, reads like a romance, and it is to be doubted if there is any historical truth in this romantic tale.

Another invasion of Gauḍa was by Harṣadeva. The Pasupati temple inscription of Jayadeva,<sup>2</sup> dated in 759 A. D., describes his father-in-law Harṣadeva of the Bhagadatta dynasty as lord of, Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaṇṇiga and Kośala. As the kings of Kāmarūpa claim descent from the epic hero Bhagadatta, Harṣadeva may be regarded as a king of Kāmarūpa.

The extent of the depredations and devastations of these invasions can be better understood with reference to the results of the excavations at Paharpur and Mahasthanagar. The excavated sites have revealed the existence of magnificent buildings of the Gupta and post Gupta periods at both these places. The remains are enough to show that the old structures were desolated in the subsequent period and on their ruins new ones were erected in the Pāla period. This was perhaps due to a calamity like the depredations of a foreign army.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ibid, IV. Vs. 332, 335.

2. IA, IX. p. 178; IHO, 1931, p. 664.

3. IC, II, pp. 518 ff.; Mr. A. C. Banerjee is of opinion that the invasion of the Saila king was more serious and disastrous in consequences.



## CHAPTER III

### The Pāla Dynasty

In their inscriptions the Pālas do not claim descent from any mythical figure or epic hero like contemporary dynasties. The Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla informs us that Gopāla I, the founder of the dynasty, was the son of 'khaṇḍitārāti (killer of enemies) Vapyāṭa and grandson of 'sarva-avadāta' Dayitaviṣṇu. From this it seems that before Gopāla I this family was not of much importance. Mm. H. P. Shastri found in the end of the 32nd chapter of the commentary<sup>1</sup> on 'Aṣṭasāhasaikā-Prajñāpāramitā' by Haribhadra that Dharmapāla has been described as 'Rājabhāṭādi-vaṁśa-patita'. The Ms. is in a Katmandu library and is written in the 11th or 12th century script in the Traikūṭa-vihāra. Scholars have generally taken this Dharmapāla to be the second Pāla king and tried to establish some connection of the dynasty with Rājārājabhaṭa of the Khaḍga family of Samataṭa. But there is difference of opinion about the meaning of the expression, 'Rājabhāṭādi-vaṁśa-patita'. Mm. H. P. Shastri was of opinion that it denotes remote connection with Rājabhāṭa and rendered the passage to mean that Dharmapāla belonged to the family of a military officer of some king. Mr. N. N. Vasu<sup>2</sup> is of opinion that Dharmapāla came of the family of Rājabhāṭa, while another writer<sup>3</sup> thinks that the Pālas were connected with him through the female line. It appears strange that

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1. The śloka runs thus:--

Rāje Rājabhāṭādi-vaṁśa-patita Śrī Dharmapālasya vai  
Tattva-loka-vidhāyinī viractia sat-panjikeyam mayā

See MASB, III, p. 6

2. VJI, Rājanya Kāṇḍa, p. 147

3. IHQ, VII, p. 533 ; see for some interesting suggestions on this point by the present writer, IC, II, pp. 795 ff.



if there had been any such connection of the Pālas with a previous ruling dynasty, the court-poets failed to mention that in their panegyrics. It is therefore reasonable to hold that Gopāla I came of a 'plebian' family.

Recently there have been some discussions about the caste of the Pālas. Their inscriptions are silent on this point. The Mañju-śrī-Mū'akalpā<sup>1</sup> calls Gopāla I a 'śādra'. According to Abūl Fazl, the Pālas were Kāyasthas.<sup>2</sup> Mr N. N. Vasu accepts the statement of Akbar's court historian, but, for the history of the Hindu period his statements are not much valued. The 'Rāmacarita' of Sandhyākaranandī describes Dharmapāla as 'Samudra-kula-dīpa',<sup>3</sup> and in the commentary of the same verse he is compared with Ikṣvāku. It is stated in the Kamauli plate of Vaidyadeva that the Pālas belonged to the solar dynasty (Mihirasya-vaṁśa).<sup>4</sup> Sandhyākaranandī and Vaidyadeva flourished in the 12th century and were intimately connected with the Pāla court. In a passage of the Udayasundarī-kathā of the Guzrat poet Soddhala of the 11th century it seems that Dharmapāla has been described as belonging to the Māndhātṛ-vaṁśa.<sup>5</sup> Mr J. C. Ghose<sup>6</sup> says that mythologically the sea-god and Māndhātā belonged to the family of the sun and therefore concludes that the Pālas belonged to the solar dynasty, as there is agreement in the above accounts. Ghanarāma in his 'Dharmamaṅgala', written in 1713 A. D., narrates that Devapāla was the illegitimate son of Dharmapāla through the union of his wife with the sea-god. R. D. Banerjee<sup>7</sup> was of opinion that most probably the Pālas came from the sea and in the absence of any plausible account of their ancestry, they became known in popular tradition as the children of the sea-god. It must be said that the Pālas were

1. Vs. 683-90.

2. Jarret, 'Ain-i-Akbari,' II, pp. 145 ; N. N. Vasu, 'Rājanya-Kaṇḍa, p' 151

3. 1/4.

4. Kamauli plate, verse 2.

5. Kathāncana valiyasa saptāṅga-samagren-Ottarapathasvāmina Māndhātṛ-vaṁśa-prabhavēna bhūbhṛta Dharmapālena saha vighraho dīrghatām-āvāpa. published in G. O. S., p. 4.

6. IHQ, IX, pp. 479 ff.

7. BI, I, p. 163.



Buddhists and it is not to be expected that they should mention their caste like the Brahmanical ruling dynasties. But though their inscriptions are silent, Sandhyākaraṇandi and Vaidyadeva tried to prove the Kṣatriyahood of their masters. For about four centuries the Pālas performed the functions of the Kṣatriyas and contracted matrimonial relationship with the Rāṣṭrkūṭas and Kalacuris. If they were not 'de jure' Kṣatriyas, 'de facto' Kṣatriyahood can be claimed for them, although it is to be noted that their religious system did not recognise the caste divisions of the Brahmanical religion.

Tārānātha says that Gopāla was elected to the vacant throne of Vaṅga some years after the rule of the Candra dynasty. His evidence is not reliable unless it is corroborated by some other sources. Sandhyākaraṇandi's 'Rāmacarita'<sup>1</sup> and the Kamauli grant<sup>2</sup> refer to Verendra as the 'Janakabhū' (fatherland) of the Pālas, and from this it would seem that northern Bengal was their original home. The Tibetan historian further records that Gopāla extended his power over Magadha. The extension of power from Varendra to Magadha was natural rather than from Vaṅga to Magadha.

It is pretty sure that Gopāla must have given ample proof of his military ability and political wisdom before his election to the throne by the 'prakṛtis' (which we are inclined to take in the light of Śukra's interpretation of the term as denoting chief officers of the state—at most the sane and sober section or the leaders of the people<sup>3</sup>) at the most critical juncture when the very existence of the kingdom was at stake. This unmistakably shows that he was the only man who was thought competent to cope with the situation. It is quite probable that Gopāla might have come into prominence by warding off one of the foreign invasions that preceded his rise. It has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that in the first verse of

1. 1/38 ; 1/50.

2. 4th verse.

3. See Ch. on Administration.

4. IHQ, VII, pp. 593 ff.

Jitvā yah kāmākāri-prabhavaiṃ abhibhavaṃ śāśvatīm prāpa śāntim  
Sa Śrīmān Lokanātha jayati Daśavalonyaśca Gopāldevaḥ.



the Bhagalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla a pun has been used on the word 'kāmakāri', and in case of Buddha it refers to Māra, while it may refer to king Harṣa of Kāmrūpa in case of Gopāla. Tārānātha most probably confused Harṣa of Kāmrūpa with Harṣa of Kāśmīra who, according to him, was a contemporary of Gopāla.<sup>1</sup> He must have been a man of unusual abilities which commanded respects from his contemporaries.

The spirit of the inscriptions points out that he proved himself equal to the occasion and the confidence that was reposed in him was amply justified. We do not know who were the enemies against whom he had to fight, but his military preparations and campaigns are alluded to in the Mongyr plate of Devapāla, which further records that he extended the boundary of his kingdom upto the sea-coast. If Tārānātha is to be believed, Magadha was also annexed. If he cannot be credited with any great political achievement, it seems that peace and order was restored after a period of misrule and anarchy, and a strong consolidated kingdom was left, thus making the task of his successor Dharmapāla easier in order to take an active part in north-Indian politics. According to Tārānātha, Gopāla ruled for 45 years. It seems that he was sufficiently advanced in age before his election. The 'Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa'<sup>2</sup> records that he died at the age of eighty after a reign of 27 years. He was succeeded by his son Dharmapāla.

The outstanding political fact of the period from 750 to 950 A. D. was the tripartite struggle among the three great powers, the Pratihāras, the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, for imperial suzerainty of northern India and for the possession of Kanauj, the imperial city of the time. Dharmapāla inherited a consolidated kingdom, and it seems that his ambition was to make Bengal the suzerain power in northern India. Naturally he turned his attention to the west. It is not known which were the powers with whom he had to fight at first for the westward expansion of his kingdom. The

1. Schiefner, Tārānātha, pp. 195 ff.

2. Vs. 683-90.



Gawalior praśasti<sup>1</sup> informs that Pratihāra Vatsarāja wrested the sovereignty of Kanauj from Bhaṇḍikuḷa. Dharmapāla must have regarded him as a rival, but in the encounter the Pāla king was defeated. We know from the Wani and Radhanpur plates<sup>2</sup> that Rāṣṭrakūṭa Dhruva defeated Vatsarāja who had inflicted a defeat on the Gauḍa king. But though defeated in his first attempt, Dharmapāla did not give up his imperial ambition and made further attempts to occupy Kanauj, because not long after this we find him in the possession of the Ganges-Yamuna Doab. The Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa record that the Gauḍa king was defeated by Dhruva in the Ganges-Yamuna valley<sup>3</sup> and this is confirmed by the Baroda and Surat plates of Karkarāja.<sup>4</sup> Chronologically it stands thus that in the westward expansion of his kingdom Dharmapāla received two checks—first from Vatsarāja and next from Dhruva. Dhruva attacked Vatsarāja in C. 789 A. D., and therefore Dharmapāla was defeated by Vatsarāja before that. Dhruva died before May, 794 A. D.,<sup>5</sup> and he must have defeated the Pāla king before that date.

But nothing could arrest the political expansion of Bengal, reinvigorated and regenerated as it was from the political turmoil after the election of Gopāla. The Pālas were determined to assert themselves in north Indian politics and make Bengal a first class political power. The Pratihāra king was driven into the desert by Dhruva and the next Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III was engaged in a fratricidal war for succession with his brother Stambha,<sup>6</sup> and thus the time was opportune for Dharmapāla. The 7th verse of the Mongyr plate of Devapāla states that his (Dharmapāla's) army in course of 'digvijaya' visited Kedāra (in the Himalayas) and Gokarṇa which has been sought to be identified with Gokarṇa-tīrthā

1. EI, XVIII, p. 101

2. Ibid. VI, p. 244 ; IA., XI, p. 157.

3. EI., XVIII, p. 250

4. 1A., XII, p. 160 ; EI., XX, p. 145

5. Dr. Altekar, The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their times p. 56.

6. Ibid., p. 61.



in Nepal, Gokarna in the Bombay Presidency and in Orissa.<sup>1</sup> The 12th verse of the Khalimpur plate enumerates the countries that actually acknowledged his overlordship. It is told that "with a sign of his gracefully moved eyebrows he installed the illustrious king of Kānya-kubja, who readily was accepted by the kings of Bhoja (Vidarbha), Matsya (Jaipur), Madra (E. Panjab), Kuru (Delhi region), Yadu (Mathurā), Yavana (W. Panjab), Avanti (Malwa) Gāndhāra (Taxila) and Kīra (Kangra valley),<sup>2</sup> bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling and for whom his own golden coronation jar was lifted by the delighted elders of Pañcāla".<sup>3</sup> Further light on the whole situation is thrown by the 3rd verse of the Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla. It is known therefrom that Dharmapāla took possession of Kanauj from Indrarāja<sup>4</sup> and installed his own 'protege' Cakrāyudha on its throne by calling an imperial assembly. His overlordship was acknowledged, and the war of 'digvijaya' he had to undertake for this purpose speaks of the stupendousness of the task. The supreme political achievement was sanctified by holding the imperial assembly at Kanauj.

The undisputed sovereignty of Dharmapāla over northern

1. 'IC,' IV, pp. 264-67.

2. The Kīra country has been identified with Kīragrāma or Bajinath in the Kangra district by Dr. R. C. Majumdar ('IHO, IX, p. 11.)

3. Two interpretations of this verse are possible. According to the other, it seems that Dharmapāla himself was installed on the throne of Kanauj.

4. Dr. R. C. Majumdar identified Indrarāja with the prince of that name, younger brother of Govinda III, who was in charge of Lāṭeṣvaramaṇḍala which denotes, according to him, the whole northern possession of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas ('Journal of the Department of Letters, X, 1923, p. 37 fn.) But some scholars identify Indrarāja with Indrāyudha of Jaina 'Harivamśa,' the ruler of the north, who was ruling contemporaneously with Vatsarāja. (BI, p. 180; Dr H. C. Ray, DH, I. p. 285) If this identification is to be accepted, it may be conjectured that Indrāyudha and Chakrāyudha were of the same family and the cause of the latter was probably championed by Dharmapāla. Chakrāyudha has been described as one 'whose lowly demeanour is manifest because of his dependence on others' in the Gwalior praśāsti and as 'begging of Dharmapāla' the crown of Kanauj in the Bhagalpur plate. Is it because of his seeking the throne of Kanauj from Indrāyudha with the help and support of Dharmapāla?



India and his handling of the situation according to his pleasure did not go unchallenged. The invasion of Dhruva did not crush the Pratihāra power but only gave a temporary blow to its vigorous rise. Nāgabhaṭa II, son and successor of Vatsarāja, once more tried to consolidate the Pratihārapower in order to make another trial of strength with the Pālas. Before actually taking the field, he came to a close understanding with the kings of Sindhu, Andhra, Vidarbha and Kalinga<sup>1</sup> thus making a strong confederacy of states which, as Dr. Majumdar points out, "formed a central belt right across the country bounded in the east by the empire of the Pālas and on the south by that of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas." Thus strengthening his position, Nāgabhaṭa II most probably first directed his attention to his eastern rival and defeated Cakrāyudha, Dharmapāla's nominee on the throne of Kanauj. This was nothing but a challenge to the suzerainty of Dharmapāla and necessarily brought him on the field. This fight between Nāgabhaṭa II and Dharmapāla for the overlordship of northern India was one of the most fiercely contested battles of the period and in all probability both the parties were equally matched. The epigraphic records of the vassals of the Pratihāras claim victories over the Gauḍa emperor, implying that they followed Nāgabhaṭa in his campaign. In an inscription of Avantivarman II, great grandson of Vāhukadhavala and a feudatory of Mahendrapāla, it has been claimed that Vāhukadhavala defeated in battle<sup>2</sup> king Dharma who may be identified with Dharmapāla. Again, from the Catsu inscription of Bālāditya it is known that Saṅkaragaṇa, the Guhilot prince, conquered Bhaṭa, king of the Gauḍa country, and made a present of his kingdom to his overlord.<sup>3</sup> It is known from the Jodhpur inscription of Bauka

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1. EI, XVIII, pp. 101 ff; JDL, X, p. 38

2. EI, IX, pp. 2 ff.

3. Dr. Majumdar has adduced good reasons to prove that Bhaṭa refers Dharmapāla and the overlord to Nāgabhaṭa II. Op. Cit. Also see IHQ, IX, pp. 479 ff.



that his father Kakka won distinction by fighting with the Gauḍas at Mudgagiri.<sup>1</sup>

Though no details regarding the preparations of Dharmapāla are known, yet from the nature of the vast and elaborate preparations of his rival from every possible quarter and from the description of the array of the mighty hosts of the lord of Vaṅga in the Gawalior praśasti, it can be presumed that the Pāla emperor must have equipped himself fully well to meet the formidable enemy. If Kakka's fight with the Gauḍas refers to Nāgabhaṭa II's fight with Dharmapāla, the Pratihāras advanced as far as Mongyr and the victory of this severe battle was also on their side. But the victory, so strenuously and valiantly won, could not offer to the Pratihāra king the desired overlordship. Once more the Rāṣṭrakūṭas under Govinda III appeared on the scene and the Radhanpur plates record that the Pratihāra king "in fear vanished no body knew wither". Govinda III overran the Pratihāra territory and advanced as far as the Himalayas. The Sanjan plates inform us that Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha submitted to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch of their own accord. In the Nilgund inscription it is mentioned that Govinda III fettered the people of Gauḍa.<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. D. Banerji suggested from this that Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha

1. It appears that the Jodhpur inscription of Bauka is dated in Samvat 4, and it is dated in his regnal year and not in V. E. 894, as Drs. Bhandarkar and Majumdar read it (EI, XVIII, p. 99). Kakka, father of Bauka, had another son named Kakkuka whose Ghatiyala inscription is dated in V. S. 918-861 A. D. There is no reason to take, as Mr. R. D. Banerji does, the Jodhpur inscription later than the Ghatiyala inscription, nor can we accept his opinion that Kakka, father of Bauka and Kakkuka, cannot be regarded as a contemporary of Nāgabhaṭa II and Dharmapāla. If it is not accepted that Kakka fought for Nāgabhaṭa II, he must have fought for Bhoja, as there is no evidence to show that Rāmaprabhadrā, the immediate successor of Nāgabhaṭa II, could advance to Mudgagiri to fight with the Pālas. It is also not likely, as we shall presently see, that in the first part of the 9th century Bhoja could fight with Devāpala at Mudgagiri. Thus it is quite reasonable to hold that Kakka fought for Nāgabhaṭa II against Dharmapāla. (JBORS, 1928, pp. 489 ff.)

2. EI, VI, p. 105.



invoked the assistance of Govinda III against Nāgabhaṭa II. Though it cannot be definitely ascertained, it seems quite probable that Dharmapāla after his defeat by Nāgabhaṭa II did not risk another encounter with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and thought it wise to submit to Govinda III.<sup>1</sup> From a comparison of the Wani and Radhanpur grants the northern invasion of Govinda III can be assigned to the period between 807 and 808 A. D. It is therefore clear that the reverses of Dharmapāla must have taken place before that date.

Dharmapāla is one of the greatest kings of the Pāla dynasty and takes an honourable place among the great kings known to Indian history. He assumed the highest imperial titles of those days, viz. Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Parameśvara and Mahārājādhirāja, while his father was styled only Mahārājādhiaāja.<sup>2</sup> His name and fame was not confined within his kingdom. The Guzrat poet Soddhala of the eleventh century calls him Ottarapathasvāmin. He assumed the title Vikramaśīla either to signalise his might or

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1. Mr. N. N. Das Gupta tried to prove with considerable force of arguments that (1) there was an encounter between Dharmapāla and Govinda III and (2) this was anterior to the defeat inflicted by Nāgabhaṭa II (JBORS., XII, p-361). As regards the first point, in the Sanjan plates it is said that Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha voluntarily submitted to Govinda III's prowess. The possession of the Ganges and the Yamuna valley alluded to in the Baroda plates of Karkarāja II does not seem to mean permanent occupation. In course of his northern campaign up to the Himālayas he must have for the time being occupied some portion of the Ganges valley. The relation between Dharmapāla and Govinda III may not have been one of amicability, but it is likely that the former did not risk a battle with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas (if we interpret in the light of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records). If there have been any alliance between them against Nāgabhaṭa II, as has been suggested by R. D. Banerjee, it seems from the evidence of the Nilgund inscription that the position of Dharmapāla was an inferior one. As regards the second point, Mr. Das Gupta's assertion is based on the 10th verse of the Gwalior praśasti. We prefer Dr. Majumdar's translation. It must be pointed out that in the Sanjan plates the submission of Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha has been mentioned after the defeat of Nāgabhaṭa II.

2. Khalimpur plate.



to commemorate the foundation of the Vikramaśīlā monastery. The Somapurī-mahāvihāra<sup>1</sup> also owed its origin to the great Pāla king. The second verse of the Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla records certain facts which throw light on his administration and the liberality of the man himself, and these seem to be corroborated by other sources too. Though himself a devout Buddhist, he was very particular in following the policy that his subjects should be governed in accordance with their respective śāstric rules. This is alluded to in the 5th verse of the Mongyr plate of his son. That this tolerance was not a thing to be boasted of in the praśastis is attested by the Mahābodhi inscription or Keśava praśasti of the 26th year of Dharmapāla's reign, which records the setting up of a Caturmukha-liṅga of Mahādeva in the great Buddhist holy place. It is further recorded in the Bhagalpur plate that incidence of his taxation was equitable and just. Many kings sought his protecting shelter which he gladly accorded to them.<sup>2</sup> The defeated kings were not uprooted but reinstated on their thrones and a friendly policy was adopted towards them. It is no wonder that a monarch with such brilliant achievements to his credit, whose government was based on so just and benign principles, should win the love and respect of all classes of his subjects. His court-poet<sup>3</sup> records that his praises were sung by the cowherd boys, hermits, village folk, traders and the rich alike. He ruled at least for 32 years.

It is known from the Khalimpur plate that the crown prince Tribhuvanapāla was the dūtaka of that grant. Most probably he died during the life-time of his father. Dharmapāla was succeeded by Devapāla, his son by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess Raṇṇādevī. During the reign of Devapāla the Pāla arms were crowned with success everywhere. It is stated in the Mongyr plate that in course of his 'digvijaya' he advanced as far as the Vindhyaś and the Kamboja country. This is confirmed by the 13th

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1. Vide Ante

2. Mongyr plate, Vs. 8.

3. Khalimpur plate, Vs. 18.



verse of the Badal Pillar inscription where Devapāla's victories in the Vindhyās and Kamboja country have been alluded to. It seems that he fought with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas during the interregnum and the period of minority of Amoghavarṣa I. It is not precisely known where the Kambojas lived at this time.<sup>1</sup> Thus the statement in the Badal Pillar inscription that by the wise counsel and policy of his minister the whole tract bounded by the Vindhyās and the Himālayas and by the eastern and western seas paid tribute to Devapāla was not a mere political exaggeration but an actual fact.

These achievements in the said praśasti have been attributed to Darbhapāni, but it is also stated therein that by the policy and counsel of Kedāramiśra (who also served Devapāla) the Gauḍa king "eradicated the race of the Utkalas, humbled the pride of the Huṇas and shattered the conceit of Drāviḍa and Gurjara kings." It seems that the victories and supremacy won during the first part of his reign were challenged, and Devapāla had to undertake another expedition to curb their power and maintain Pāla supremacy. That the two rival powers, the Pratihāras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas, tried to assert their power is also hinted at in their own records, though they are scrupulously silent of their own defeats. The Gwalior inscription of Vailabhata indicates that Gwalior was the boundary of the Pratihāra kingdom at the time of Rāmabhadra and in the early part of the reign of Bhoja. The 12th verse of the Gwalior praśasti of Bhoja seems to imply that Rāmabhadra freed his country from the yoke of foreign soldiers, and, as Dr. Majumdar points out, it seems likely that the "band of foreign soldiers by driving whom Rāmabhadra got back the lost fame belonged to the Pālas, for the other rival power, viz., the Rāṣṭrakūṭas are not known to have advanced as far as the Gurjara kingdom at

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1. At the time of Aśoka the Kambojas were a Himālayan tribe in N. W. India. It is known from the Irda plate of king Nayapāladeva that there was a Kamboja ruling family in south western Bengal in the 10th century. Did Devapāla fight with this family or a Himālayan tribe? (EI., XXII, pp. 150 ff.)



this period.<sup>1</sup> The evidence of Daulatpura plates and Ghatiyala inscription goes to show that some time before 843 A. D. the Pratihāras under Bhoja made an attempt to reassert their power, and though it met with some initial success, his power was again checked some time before 861 A. D. This is in complete agreement with what we know from the Pāla records.

Amoghavarṣa I was the Rāṣṭrakūṭa contemporary of Devapāla. During the period of his minority and anarchy Devapāla victoriously advanced as far as the Vindhyaś in course of his first expedition. It is stated in the Sirur<sup>2</sup> and Nīlgund grants that the kings of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Magadha paid homage to Amoghavarṣa, but there are reasons to hold that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas advanced through Orissa after the conquest of Veṅgi.<sup>3</sup> Amoghavarṣa finally crushed the power of the Veṅgi ruler Vijayāditya II sometime before 866 A. D., the date of the issuing of the Sirur grants. It seems, therefore, that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion of Bengal should be placed after 860 A. D., and that Devapāla defeated the Rāṣṭrakūṭas sometime before that date in course of his second expedition, when Amoghavarṣa was perhaps engaged in wars with his Guzrat cousins and in putting down risings of the rebellious chiefs.

It is not known who was the contemporary Utkala king defeated by Devapāla.<sup>4</sup> The conquest of the Utkalas is corroborated by the Bhagalpur plate in which it is recorded that Jayapāla, cousin and general of Devapāla, drove away the Utkala king from the throne. Huṇamaṇḍala in northern Malwa has been mentioned in an inscription of the Paramāra king Vākpati-Muṇja.<sup>5</sup> The Bhagalpur plate also records that Jayapāla defeated the king of

1. Dr. Majumdar, *Op. Cit.*

2. *EI.*, VII, pp. 104-5

3. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their times, pp. 76, 84. A march through Bagelkhand and Bihar without coming into serious conflicts with the rising power of the Pratihāras under Bhoja does not seem likely. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa grants do not indicate that Amoghavarṣa I marched against Bhoja.

4. The king of Utkala may be a member of the Kara family.

5. *EI.*, XIII, p. 102



Prāgyotiṣa (Kāmarūpa). The Kāmarūpa king defeated by Jayapāla was most probably Harjaravarman whose Tezpur rock inscription is dated in 829 A. D., or his successor Vanamāla.<sup>1</sup>

The Nālandā inscription of the 39th year of Devapāla reveals the fact that there was constant intercourse between the Pāla kingdom and the Indian colonies in the Pacific Ocean, specially Java and Sumatra. The object of the inscription was to grant five villages for the upkeep of the Buddhist monastery built by the Śailendra king Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa and Yavadvīpa at the instance of his mother Tārādevī. He requested Devapāla to grant the income of five villages for its maintenance. This request was gladly and readily complied with, thus showing that his wide charities compared with those of Bali, Karna and Vikramāditya were not vague flattery of the court-poet.<sup>2</sup> This religious contact must have been accompanied by brisk commercial activity, as the testimonies of Fā-hien, I-tsing and other Chinese travellers point to such a state of things even before the rise of the Pālas.

The history of the Pālas at the height of their power remains incomplete without some reference to the part played by Vākpāla and Jayapāla, and Garga and Darbhapāṇi. We learn from the Bhagalpur plate that Vākpāla was to Dhamtpāla what Lakṣmaṇa was to Rāmacandra, and this able and trusted brother was mainly responsible for his conquests. Again, Devapāla owed many of his victories to the consummate generalship of Jayapāla. The Badal or Garuḍa pillar inscription informs that the Brahmana minister Garga was to Dharmapāla what Bṛhaspati was to Indra, and it was through his counsel that Dharmapāla, lord of the east, became the master of the west also. No less helpful were the services of Darbhapāṇi and Kadāramiśra. Darbhapāṇi's policy brought the tract between the Himālayas and the Vindhyās under Devapāla, and Kadāramiśra's advice was responsible for his victories over the Utkalas, Huṇas, Drāviḍas and Gurjaras. The successes of Dharmapāla

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1. DH. pp. 244-45

2. Mongyr plate Vs. 14



pāla and Devapāla were no doubt to a certain extent due to their own abilities and personality. But the way in which bold claims have been made in the Bhagalpur grant and in the Badal praśasti reflects no mean credit on the successful generalship of Vākpāla and Jayapāla, veterans of many battle-fields, and the competent ministers like Garga, Darbhapāṇi and Kedārasamiśra,<sup>1</sup> shrewd in diplomacy and wise in counsel.

The dutaka of the Mongyr plate was the crown prince Rājya-pāla, but Devapāla was succeeded by Vighrahapāla. The Badal inscription places Śūrapāla between Devapāla and Nārāyaṇapāla, and therefore it can be accepted that Śūrapāla was a virūda of Vighrahapāla I. The relation of Vighrahapāla with Devapāla cannot be ascertained, and the opinions of the scholars are divided on this point. The Bhagalpur plate after describing the achievements of Dharmapāla introduces his brother Vākpāla and states that from him ('tasmāt') was born Jayapāla (Vs. 4 & 5). In the next verse Devapāla has been described as 'pūrvaja' referring to Jayapāla. Mr. A. K. Maitra interpreted the word to mean elder brother and took Devapāla and Jayapāla as brothers. It may be said that the word 'pūrvaja' does not necessarily mean elder brother and may also mean 'elder in age'. If strict Sanskrit grammar is to be followed, 'from him' refers to the immediate preceding noun i.e., to Vākpāla and in that case Jayapāla is to be regarded as the son of Vākpāla. Again, in the sixth verse the achievements of Jayapāla on behalf of Devapāla have been recorded, and in the next verse it

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1. The question as to whether Kedāramiśra was the minister of Devapāla or Śūrapāla is not so difficult to answer as it appears to be. The 15th verse makes him a minister of Śūrapāla. But in the 13th verse the conquest of a Gauḍeśvara over Orissa, Kāmarūpa, the Huṇas, Drāviḍas and Gurjaras has been attributed to his counsel. It does not seem that Śūrapāla had such military success. Devapāla enjoyed a long reign (at least of 39 years). Nothing specifically has been said of Darbhapāṇi's son Someśvara who most probably died at a comparatively young age. It is therefore quite possible that both Darbhapāṇi and his grandson Kedāramiśra served Devapāla.



is said that from him was born Vighrahapāla. If strict grammar is to be followed in this case, 'from him' refers to Devapāla, but it must be said that in the sixth verse Devapāla has been incidentally mentioned and the main theme of the verse was the exploits of Jayapāla. Dr. Horenle wrote in the Centenary Review of the Asiatic Society of Bengal<sup>1</sup>, "It seems clear from this (Amgachi) grant that Vighrahapāla was not a nephew but a son of Devapāla, for the pronoun 'his son' (tat-sūnuḥ) must refer to the nearest preceding noun which is Devapāla. In the Bhagalpur grant this reference is obscured through the interpolation of an immediate verse in praise of Jayapāla, which makes it appear as if Vighrahapāla were a son of Jayapāla". Mr. A. K. Maitra<sup>2</sup> accepted this view and went so far as to identify Rājyapāla, the 'dūtāka' of the Mongyr grant, with Vighrahapāla or Śūrapāla. Kielhorn<sup>3</sup> was of opinion that Vighrahapāla was the son of Jayapāla and grandson of Vākpāla, and R. D. Banerjee<sup>4</sup> accepted this view. In all fairness, the question should be kept open and two genealogies are possible.<sup>5</sup> The

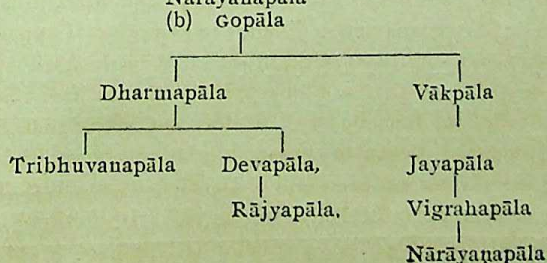
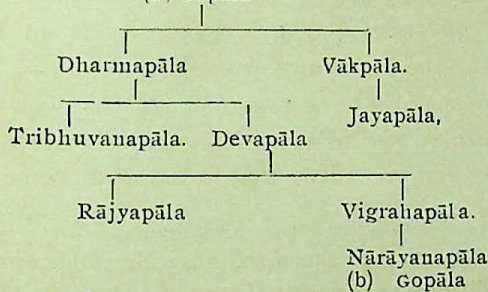
1. Appendix II, p. 206

2. Gauḍalekhamālā, p. 97, fn.

3. E I., VIII, Appendix, p. 17.

4. BI, p. 218

5. (a) Gopāla





most important point in the controversy is that there is no mention of Vākpāla and Jayapāla in the grants of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, whereas in the grants of subsequent Pāla kings the victories of those two reigns have been ascribed to Vākpāla and Jayapāla. Although it may be argued that the praises of Vākpāla and Jayapāla in the public records might have made them popular heroes and that after their death the subsequent Pāla kings did not feel jealous to give due credit to the two distinguished generals of their own family, yet the way in which the names of Vākpāla and Jayapāla have been introduced cannot be overlooked, and it suggests that Vighrahapāla and Nārāyaṇapāla were probably directly connected with them and not with Dharmapāla and Devapāla.

Dr. H. C. Ray<sup>1</sup> suspects the likelihood of a palace revolution in the case of the accessions of Devapāla and Vighrahapāla I. It may be pointed out that there is not the slightest hint in the Pāla records of a palace revolution or fratricidal war. The same scholar admits that Devapāla succeeded peacefully, as the evidence of the Mongyr plate is definite and clear (v. 12). His son Rajyapāla was alive at the time of the issue of the Mongyr plate of his 33rd regnal year, but the 'dūtaka' of the Nālandā grant of the 39th year was Bālavarmān, the lord of the Vyāgratī-maṇḍala. It seems that Rajyapāla died by this time during the life-time of his father and the same was perhaps the case with Tribhuvanapāla, brother of Devapāla, and the 'dūtaka' of the Khalimpur grant of 32nd year of Dharmapāla's reign.

The short reign of Vighrahapāla I was not without political significance. The king of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Magadha who paid homage to Amoghavarṣa I was very likely Vighrahapāla I, as it has already been pointed out that the Rāṣṭrakuṭa invasion took place after 850 A. D. The acceptance of an ascetic life by him by shirking all responsibilities to his son might have been due to defeats by the foreign invaders and humiliation consequent thereon. It cannot be clearly stated whether Vighrahapāla I suffered defeats

1. DH., I. pp. 290, 296



at the hands of Bhoja, though the probability is strongly so. The Pāla records are significantly silent over the Pratihāra invasions of the time. But the gradual extension of the Pratihāra empire at the cost of the Pālas can no longer be doubted. Bhoja, like his grandfather, made extensive preparations in his Bengal campaign. It is known from the Kalha plates of Soḍhadeva that the Kalcuri chief Guṇāmbodhideva who ruled in Kālañjara got some territories from Bhoja and took away the fortune of Gauḍa by a warlike expedition.<sup>1</sup> The evidence of the Benares and Bilhari inscriptions<sup>2</sup> has been generally construed to imply that Bhoja was most probably assisted by the Kalacuri king Kokkaladeva against the Pālas. After the publication of the Amoda plates<sup>3</sup> that view is perhaps to be changed, and it seems that Kokkaladeva I raided Vaṅga on his own account most probably during the reign of Vīgrahapāla I or that of his successor.

Though no record has yet come to light to show the subjugation of Magadha and adjacent countries by Bhoja, the discovery of the inscriptions of the early part of the reign of his son Mahendrapāla and the absence of Pāla records in that region indicate that the expansion of the Pratihāra power over Magadha might have taken place in the reign of Bhoja. In the 7th and 9th

1. EI VII p. 86.

2. Ibid. II pp. 297-302.

3. Ibid. XIX, pp 7ff. The Bilahari inscription states that Kokkala conquered the whole earth by planting Bhojadeva and Kṛṣṇarāja as his columns of fame in the north and south respectively, who were to be identified with the Pratihāra king Bhoja I (c. 836-90 A.D.) and the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa II (c. 78-915 A.D.). Kokkala was the father-in-law of the latter and may be assigned to the first part of the latter half of the ninth century. The Benares plates inform that Kokkala granted freedom from fear to Bhoja, Ballabharāja Śrī-Harṣa, king of Citrakūṭa and the king Saṅkaragaṇa. It is known from the Amoda plates that he raided the treasures of Kārṇāṭa, Vaṅga, Gurjara, Koṅkaṇa and Sakāmbhari king and also those born of the Turaṣka and Raghu families. The king of Kārṇāṭa and the king, born of the Raghu family, have been identified with Kṛṣṇa II and Bhoja I respectively (See HQ, XII, p. 132 ff.) This goes against the view that Kokkaladeva helped Bhoja.



years of the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla the Pāla sway was acknowledged in Gaya, and his Bhagalpur grant was issued in his 17th regnal year from Mongyr, and it seems that Magadha was included in the Pāla empire in c. 880 A.D. Bhoja died in c.890 A.D.. The evidence of the Ram-Gaya, Guneria and Itkhauri inscriptions<sup>1</sup> goes unmistakably to show that some portion of Magadha was included in the Pratihāra empire in the last decade of the 9th century. The discovery of the Paharpur pillar inscription of the 5th year of the reign of Mahendrapāla<sup>2</sup> shows further expansion of the Pratihāra power. It is quite likely that the Pratihāras advanced along the northern bank of the Ganges and occupied the very citadel of the Pālas. Thus in the long struggle with the Pratihāras the Pālas were ousted for the time being from their 'janakabhū' Varendri. There is nothing to be wondered at how the name of Mahendrapāla has been included by the Tibetan historian Tārānātha in the list of the kings of Magadha and Gauḍa. It is known from the Catsu inscription<sup>3</sup> that the Guhilot king Guhila II, son of Harṣarāja, defeated the Gauḍa king and levied tributes from princes in the east. Harṣarāja was a contemporary of Bhoja, and his son therefore may be regarded as a contemporary of Mahendrapāla. This Guhilot family was a loyal feudatory one and rendered valuable services to the Pratihāras. Another invasion that took place about this time was by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa II who, after defeating a Gurjara king, raided Gauḍa, Aṅga, Kaliṅga and Magadha<sup>4</sup>. Kṛṣṇa II ascended the throne in c.880 A.D., and as he was engaged in the first part of his reign with the Veṅgi ruler and with the Pratihāra emperor Bhoja, his expedition in the east was probably undertaken towards the close of the 9th or beginning of 10th century.

It is not known how long the Pratihāra occupation of Magadha and northern Bengal lasted. In the 54th year of Nārā-

1. The plates have been published in 'The Pālas of Bengal.'

2. ASIR, 1927-8, pp. 101 ff.

3. EI, XII, p. 11.

4. EI., v, p. 191. Ibid., iv, p. 287.



yaṇapāla (i.e., about the second decade of the 10th century) an image was set up at Nālandā which goes to show that south-eastern Magadha was under the Pālas. Inscriptions of Rājyapāla<sup>1</sup> and Gopāla II have been found at Nālandā, Bodh-Gaya, and in northern Bengal.<sup>2</sup> After the death of Mahendrapāla the Pratihāra empire began to break up. The Rāṣtrakūṭas under Indra III dealt a crushing blow to the Pratihāras in c.916 A.D., and it is not unlikely that the Pālas might have attempted during this troubled time of the Pratihāras to recover some of their lost possessions. It must be noted that no record of the Pālas from the time of Nārāyaṇapāla to Mahīpāla I (both exclusive) has yet been found in northern Behar. The Pāla kingdom was considerably reduced during the weak rules of Vighrahapāla I, Nārāyaṇapāla, Rājyapāla, Gopāla II and Vighrahapāla II, and during their reigns many foreign invaders took the opportunity of carrying on their depredations in Bengal. It is known from two Kalacuri<sup>3</sup> inscriptions that the Cedi king Yuvarāja I and his son Lakṣmaṇarāja invaded Gauḍa and Vaṅgāla respectively. Yuvarāja I was the father-in-law of Amoghavarṣa III, the Rāṣtrakūṭa king, whose reign commenced in c. 935 A.D. Therefore Yuvarāja I and his son seem to have reigned in the first half of the 10th century, whose Pāla contemporaries were probably Rājyapāla and Gopāla II. Yuvarāja I carried on raids on many countries far and near, viz., Gauḍa, Karṇāṭa, Lāṭa, Kāśmīra and Kalinga. Lakṣmaṇarāja defeated the Vaṅgālas, Pāṇḍyās, Gurjaras and Kāśmīra. Nor was the other central Indian power sitting inactive. The Khajuraho inscription<sup>4</sup> of Candella Yaśovarman, dated in 954 A. D., informs us that he defeated the king of Gauḍa. Another Khajuraho inscription,<sup>5</sup> dated in 1001 A. D., records that the wives of the kings of Kāñchī, Andhra, Rāḍha and Aṅga lingered in the prison of his son Dhaṅgadeva.

1. IA., 1918, p. 111.

2. Recently a plate of Gopāla II has been found in the Malda district. (Bhāratavarṣa), 1344, B.S., Sravana īsaue, p. 274.

3. EI., II, p. 297, Bilhārī and Goharwa plates; 'Ibid., XI, XI, p. 142.

4. EI., I, p. 128.

5. Ibid.



## CHAPTER IV

### The Pāla Dynasty ( Continued )

The Pālas must have been passing their most critical days in in the 10th century. It seems now certain that in south-eastern and south-western Bengal two independent kingdoms were established by the Candras and Kambojas<sup>1</sup> respectively. The evidence of the Dinajpur pillar inscription goes to show that the Pālas were dispossessed of Varendra by a Kamboja chief who styled himself Gaudāḍhipa.<sup>2</sup> Palaeographically this record is to be assigned to the period between 950-1050 A. D. Most probably this king belonged to the Kamboja family of the Irda plate of Nayapāladeva. The Bangar grant of Mahīpāla I records that he recovered his paternal throne which was occupied by a usurper ( pitryam rāijyam anadnikṛta ) who is to be identified with the Kamboja king of Gauḍa. How Mahīpāla I recovered the paternal throne from him still remains unknown.

With the accession of Mahīpāla I there seems to have been a revival of the Pāla power. The Baghaura image inscription shows that Samatāṭa was included within his kingdom in his third regnal year.<sup>3</sup> The Imadpur image inscription goes to show that northern Bihar was under his possession.<sup>4</sup> If the date Samvat 1076 of the colophon of the Rāmāyaṇa is to be referred to the Vikrama era, it seems that Mahīpāla I came into conflict with Kalacuri Gaṅgeyadeva, though it has been doubted by

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1. See *Infra*, Chapter V.

2. We agree with Dr. R. C. Majumdar that the expression "Kūṇja-ragaṭāvarṣeṇa" of the inscription is to be taken as an epithet of Gauḍāpati and not as a chronogram to mean 888, which is to be referred to the Śaka era. See "Vaṅgavāṇī," 1380 B. S., p. 250 ; *BI.*, p. 243.

3. *EI.* XVII, p. 353.

4. *IA.*, XIIIV, p. 165.



some scholars.<sup>1</sup> It is stated in the Goharwa plates that Gāṅgeya-deva conquered as far as the sea of Utkala and vanquished the king of Aṅga which was included within Mahīpāla's kingdom. The most formidable invasaion during his reign was from the south. It is known from the Tirumalai rock inscription of Rājendracola that in c. 1325 A. D. his general defeated Mahīpāla.<sup>2</sup>

Mahīpāla's foreign policy has been severely criticised by Messrs R. P. Chanda<sup>3</sup> and R. D. Banerjee,<sup>4</sup> because he did not join the rulers of northern India against the Muslims. The learned author of 'Gauḍarājāmālā' observes that Mahīpāla, like the emperor Aśoka after the Kalinga war, sheathed his sword and devoted all his eneregies to pious and religious works after the recovery of northern Bengal from the Kamboja chief. Like all historical comparisons it is far from being exact and it is also a mis-statement of facts. With any stretch of historical imagination Mahīpāla I cannot be compared with the great Maurya emperor either in power and prestige or in religious and moral fervour. R. D. Banerji remarks that Mahīpāla could not make common cause with other kings because of his envy and religious bigotry. Mahīpāla, a devout Buddhist though he was, granted a village in the Puṇḍra-vardhana-bhukti to the excellent Brahmana Bhaṭṭaputra Kṛṣṇāditya-śarman in the 9th year of his reign, and many Brahmanical gods

1. The colophon was copied in Samvat 1076 when Tirabhukti was ruled over by "Mahārājādhirāja Puṇāvaloka Somavaiśodbhava Gauḍadhvaḥja Śrīmad Gāṅgeyadeva." Bendall referred the date to the Vikrama era and identified the king with Kalacuri Gāṅgeyadeva. Objections have been raised by Sylvain Levi and Mr. R. P. Chanda (summarised in *IHQ.*, 1931, pp. 679 ff). But they do not seem to be very strong in view of the evidence of the Goharwa plates. Dr. R. C. Majumdar suggests that the date 1076 is to be referred to the Saka era and the king is to be identified with Gāṅgeyadeva, successor of Nānyadeva on the throne of Mithilā. This solves all difficulties, no doubt, but it must be said that the facsimile has not been published and therefore cannot be palaeographically examined. The date of the colophon rests on a statement of Bendall who examined it in Nepal. See *IHQ.*, XII, pp. 469 ff.

2. *RI*, IX., pp. 232-33' also see Chapter V.

3. *Gauḍarājāmālā*, p. 41.

4. *BI*, p. 256.



and goddesses were installed in his reign. The charge of bigotry has no basis at all, as it is disproved both by official and private records. His reign cannot in any sense be called a period of military inactivity and religious asceticism. He was beset with difficulties from the very beginning of his reign. He had to recover the paternal throne from a usurper. The Candras were carving out a kingdom in eastern Bengal and his suzerainty was acknowledged in that region. The Cedis under Gāṅgeyadeva were making great strides in the east and most probably Mahpāla had to fight with him. If the exploits of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, the Somavamśi king of Kośala, as described in his Maranja-Mura charter, are to be believed in its entirety, he seems to have invaded Gauḍa, Rāḍha and Vaṅga during Mahipāla's reign. He had not only to re-establish the Pāla power but also to consolidate it which was tottering during the reign of his father. It will be an anachronism to judge the foreign policy of Mahipāla in the light of later history or of modern times. If he did not entangle himself in the turmoil of northern Indian politics because of the unlimited liability involved in that course of action and adopted the policy of 'safety first', it shows his foresight and political sagacity. His position was weak in own territory and his kingdom was vulnerable from every quarter. When dangers came from unexpected quarters, his energy and resources were spent in repelling them. If his resources were spent in checking the Muslim invasions, the Pāla kingdom might have ended with the shock of the Cola invasion, and anarchy and disorder, previous to the rise of the Pālas, might have been the result.

The restoration of the Pāla power by Mahipāla I and the stability of political power over northern Bengal and Magadha made their influence felt in other spheres also. In the 11th year of his reign one Bālāditya, an emigrant from Kauśāmbī and an inhabitant of Tiladhaka (modern Telāra), rebuilt a temple at

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1. JBORS. II pp. 45 ff.; for his date see DH, I, pp. 401 ff. Dr. Ray assigns to the first quarter of the 11th century.



Nālandā, which was burnt down by a conflagration.<sup>1</sup> Sthirapāla and Vasantapāla, two brothers of Mahipāla, restored Dharmarājika and Sāṅgadharmacakra and built the temple of Gandhakuṭi at Sarnatha<sup>2</sup> in 1026 A.D. Many important tanks in northern Bengal are associated with his name.<sup>3</sup> All these must have made him very popular and his name is perhaps still remembered in the popular saying that Mahipāla's praise is to be sung when husking the paddy. He was succeeded by his son Nayapāla.

After the fall of the Pratihāras, the Kalacuris were the most active enemies of the Pālas. The invasions of Kokkala, Yuvarāja, Lakṣmaṇarāja and Gāṅgeyadeva have already been referred to. The Kalacuri power rose to its height under Karṇa, son of Gāṅgeyadeva, and most of the contemporary northern Indian kings felt the brunt of his power. The Tibetan biographer<sup>4</sup> of Atiśa Srijñāna Dīpankara records the meditation of hostilities that ensued between Nayapāla and Karṇa. If the Tibetan account is to be believed in its entirety, the Kalacuri army was successful at first and besieged the holy city of Gaya but was ultimately defeated by the Pāla army. There is nothing improbable in the account that after hostilities a treaty was brought about through the good offices of the great Buddhist patriarch. With the exception of the articles of food that were destroyed at the time of war, all other things were either restored to or compensated for. The treaty concluded by Atiśa seems to have proved to be a truce. The evidence of the Paikore image inscription<sup>5</sup> and of the 'Rāmacarita'<sup>6</sup> goes to show that a second campaign against the Pālas was undertaken by Karṇa. In this expedition Karṇa advanced as far as Paikore (in the Birbhum district) and set up a

1. JASB, 1908, pp. 106-7; Gauḍalekhamālā, p. 101.

2. ASIR, 1903-4, p. 222; AL, XIV, p. 139; Gauḍalekhamālā, p. 104.

3. Gauḍarājamālā, p. 104; Mahīsantoṣa in Dinājpur, Mahipālara Dighi (tank) in Bogra and in Murshidabad.

4. JBTS., I, p. 9.

5. ASIR., 1921-22, p. 78.

6. Rāmacarita 1/9.



column there perhaps as a mark of his victorious march, where an image was carved by a certain sculptor by the order of the Cedi king. Karṇa's invasion of Bengal has also been alluded to in the Bheraghat inscription of Ahlanādevī<sup>1</sup> and in the Karanabel inscription of Jayashmīa<sup>2</sup>. It is stated in the 'Rāmacarita' that Vighrahapāla III, son and successor of Nayapāla, though he defeated Karṇa, did not uproot him and that Karṇa's daughter Yauvanaśrī was married to him. It is difficult to believe that the Cedi king who carried extensive conquests far and wide was compelled to give his daughter in marriage with Vighrahapāla. In the height of his power he overran the whole of northern India, but in the latter part of his reign he suffered many defeats. From various sources comes the story of his defeats by Candella Kīrtivarman,<sup>3</sup> Paramāra Udayāditya<sup>4</sup> and Cālukya Someśvara.<sup>5</sup> It is known from the 'Prabodha-candrodaya' that Karṇāṭa first almost annexed the Candella kingdom during the weak rule of Devendravarman, but the same drama records how his brother Kīrtivarman with the help of his Brahmana minister Gopāla restored the Candella kingdom after vanquishing Karṇa's power. Faced in the south and west by the Cālukyas and the Paramāras, the rising power of the Candellas was still a greater danger to the power of Karṇa. It is therefore quite possible that the motive behind this matrimonial alliance with Vighrahapāla III was a lasting peace with the Pālas.

The 'Vikramāṅkacarita' which narrates the exploits and military expeditions of Vikramāditya VI, son of Cālukya king Someśvara I, records that when a Yuvarāja, Vikramāditya made a raid on Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa.<sup>6</sup> It is stated in the inscriptions of the reigns of Someśvara I,<sup>7</sup> Someśvara II<sup>8</sup> and Vikramāditya VI<sup>9</sup> that the

1. E.I. II, p. 11.

2. IA., XVII, p. 217.

3. EI., p. 222; Prabodha-candrodaya, pp. 11, 12, 14.

4. EI., II, p. 185.

5. 'Über das Lebender Jaina monchs Hemacandra' by George Buhler, p. 69; IA., V, p. 317, Vikramāṅkadevacarita.

6. Ibid.

7. EI., XV, p. 86.

8. Ibid., p. 97.

9. Ibid., p. 104.



Cālukyas shattered the pride of many countries among whom the names of Gauda and Vaṅga occur. The invasion of Someśvara I must have taken place before 1053 A. D., because his Mahāsāmanta Bhogadevaraśa of the Kelwadi inscription<sup>1</sup> raided Vaṅga and seems to have followed him. As the invasion of Bengal is mentioned in the records of three successive Cālukya kings and in the 'Vikramāṅkacarita,' it is quite possible that there might have been more than one Cālukya invasion in the eleventh century.

It is a rare thing in ancient Indian history to have an account of a period from a contemporary writer. The 'Rāmacarita' by Sandhyākaranandī, the "Vālmikī of the Kali Yuga", as he styles himself at the end of his work, describes the achievements and glories of the reign of Rāmapāla who was, in the eye of the author, the Rāma of his age. A great portion of the work is devoted to the account of the struggle for the recovery of Varendra by Rāmapāla from the Kaivarta king Bhīma. The author's father Prajāpatinandī, was the 'Sāndhivigrāhika' of Rāmapāla. Sandhyākaranandī therefore must have had a first-hand knowledge of the Pāla court and the political vicissitudes of the Pālas, and in his early age he might have witnessed them. His account and specially the commentary on his work are, therefore, of unique importance for the history of Bengal in the last half of the eleventh century.

The real cause of the Kaivarta revolution is not known. Vighrahapāla III had three sons, Mahīpāla II, Śūrapāla II and Rāmapāla. Mahīpāla II succeeded his father to the throne. After his accession he began to follow an unrighteous course of action against the advice of the ministers.<sup>2</sup> Śūrapāla and Rāmapāla were put into prisons, because it was reported by evil mongers and designing men that Rāmapāla was respected by all and would

1. 'EI.,' IV, p. 259.

2. Com. 1/31 Prathamaiṁ pūrvaiṁ pitari Vighrahapāla uparate sati Mahīpāle bhrātari kṣamabhāraiṁ bhubhāraiṁ vibhrati sati anitikārāmbharate anitike nītivirudhe ārambhe udyame rate sati Mahīpālaḥ śāḍguṇaśalyasya mantrino guṇitamaguṇayan upaṣṭambhāra bhaṭimātrādisatgrahaṇena.



occupy the throne by killing him.<sup>1</sup> This apprehension led Mahīpāla to devise ways and means for the death of Rāmapāla who was kept in a solitary underground prison.<sup>2</sup> Most probably taking advantage of this internal dissension in the royal family and the general discontent thereon, the Kaivarta chief Divvoka raised the standard of revolt. Mahīpāla suddenly marched with a hastily collected force to meet the insurgents whose number was increased by the combined army of the Sāmantas of the kingdom. This was done against the express wishes of the ministers and the result was, as the ministers foresaw, defeat. Mahīpāla himself was defeated and killed, and Varendra was occupied by the Kaivarta chief.

At the time of the outbreak of the revolt Śūrapāla and Rāmapāla were in prison. It is not known how they managed to get free. The Rāmacarita does not mention Śūrapāla as a king but, according to the 13th verse of the Manahali plate, Śūrapāla ruled for however short a period it might have been. The suspicion of R. D. Banerjee<sup>3</sup> that Śūrapāla was murdered at the instigation of Rāmapāla is unwarranted, as there is not the slightest hint of it anywhere. The purpose of the author was not to write a dynastic history of the later Pālas but to glorify the achievemants of Rāmapāla, and his silence over Śūrapāla's reign was probably due to the fact that it was a very short reign in which there was nothing worth recording. It is not known where he ruled and what was the boundary of the territory under him. The Kaivartas were in possession of Varendra, and Divvoka was succeeded by his brother Rudoka who was followed by his son Bhīma. It was most probably at the time of the unsteady political state that Gauḍa was invaded by the Paramāra king Lakṣmadeva,<sup>4</sup> and the invasion of

1. Com. 1/37 Māyinām khalānām dvaninā ayam Rāmapālaḥ kṣamodhikāri sarvasammata tataśca devasya rājyamgrahisyaiti sucanyā saṅkitavipada māmasau hanisyatīti saṅkitavipadyena tasya bhuvobhartur-Mahīpālasya prabhutāya vahutarāya nirākṛti prayūktita śāṭhya prayogāt upāyavadha-cestayā tathā tvanākākārenapaune durgate kaniṣṭhe brātari Rāmapāle rakṣitari.

2. 1/33.

3. BI., p. 280.

4. EI., II, p. 193, Vs. 138.



northern Bengal by the army of a Vaṅgāla king also took place, in course of which the Buddhist teacher Karuṇāśrimitra's house at Somapura-vihāra was set on fire and he was burnt to death.<sup>1</sup>

Rāmapāla succeeded Śūarpāla. Mr. A. K. Maitra<sup>2</sup> suggested that he passed these days in Aṅga with his maternal uncle Mathanadeva. It may be pointed out that an image inscription of the second year of Rāmapāla<sup>3</sup> has been found in Bihar. During these critical days he was always closeted in discussion with his ministers and his son Rājyapāla in order to arrive at a decision as to the course of action to be taken. It was perhaps settled that by any hasty action they might fare like Mahipāla, and before any action to be taken, it would be wiser to win the confidence and active support of the Sāmantas. To this effect Rāmapāla now turned his whole attention and he met the important chiefs, implored their help and promised them reward of money and further extension of territory in case of victory. This produced the desired effect. The Sāmantas were satisfied with his behaviour and assurance. The right-hand man of Rāmapāla in the suppression of the Kaivarta revolt was Rāṣṭrakūṭa Mathanadeva who with his two sons, Kāṅguradeva and Suvarṇadeva, and his nephew Śivarāja played an effective part in the battle. The commentary<sup>4</sup> informs us that Mathanadeva defeated the king of Piṭhī and Magadha. In the Sarnatha inscription of Kumāradevī, queen of Gāhaḍavāla Govindacandra, it is said, "In the Gauḍa country there was a priceless warrior with quiver (kaṇḍapatika), this incomparable diadem of the Kṣatriyas, the Aṅga king Mahana,<sup>5</sup> the vener-

1. E.I., XXI, pp.97-131. The Nālandā inscription of Vipulaśrimitra has been assigned to the middle of the 12th century. Karuṇāśrimitra was removed by two generations of teachers from Vipulaśrimitra.

2. A course of lecture delivered by Mr. A. K. Maitra in the Calcutta University on the fall of the Pāla empire published in a summary form by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, *Maṃnavāṇi*, 1928 B.S.

3. JASB, 1908, pp. 108-9.

4. Rāmaçarita 2/8

5. The Prakṛta form of Mathana is Mahana.



able maternal uncle of kings. He conquered Devaraksita in war, maintained the glory of Rāmapāla, which rose in splendour because the obstruction by his foes was removed."<sup>1</sup> R. D. Banerjee<sup>2</sup> suggested that Devaraksita rose against the Pālas during the Kaivarta imbroglio but was subdued and then won over to the Pāla side by the marriage of his daughter Saṅkaradevī, mother or Kumāradevī.

In the commentary fourteen sāmantas are named, who took active part in the war against the Kaivarta chief Bhīma on the side of Rāmapāla. They are :—

(1). Bhīmayaśa, ruler Piṭhī and Magadha, and described as 'Kānyakuvja-vājiṇīganṭhana-bhujāṅga'. Piṭhī was the name of Bodh-Gaya and the neighbouring region.<sup>3</sup> If the above expression means any hostility to a Kānyakuvja king, he is to be identified with a Gāhaḍavāla king and not with Kalacuri Yaśaḥkarṇa as suggested by R. D. Banerjee.<sup>4</sup> Devaraksita preceded Bhīmayaśa on the throne of Piṭhī and his daughter was married to Govindacandra. Gāhaḍavāla Madanapāla's inscriptions are dated from 1104 to 1109 A. D., and in his Rahan grant<sup>5</sup> the victories over the Gauḍa elephants are said to have been achieved by his son Govindacandra. It may be that Rāmapāla after the Kaivarta war made an attempt to extend his sway in the west but was checked by the rising power of the Gāhaḍavālas. The eastward advance of the Gāhaḍavāla power during the period 1124-1146 A. D. is indicated by the Maner and Lar plates. Govindacandra's fight with the kings of Vaṅga and Gauḍa is alluded to in the Prākṛt-paiṅgalam, a work on Prākṛta metrical science.<sup>6</sup> Govindacandra's contemporaries were Rāmapāla, Kumārapāla, Gopāla III. Madanapāla and Vijayasena.

(2). Viraguṇa of Koṭaṭavī, described as 'dakṣiṇa-simhasana-cakravartī'. Mr. N. N. Vasu identifies Koṭaṭavī with Koṭa-deśa in

1. EI., IX, p. 320.

2. JBORS., IV, p. 273.

3. IA., XV 111, p. 46.

4. BI., d. 226.

5. BI., p. 784.

6. IHQ., x1, p. 564 ff.



Sarkar Kaṭaka of the Āin-Āi-kbari.<sup>1</sup> Viraguṇa may be identified with Vīra of the Deopara praśasti, who was defeated by Vijayasena.

(3). Jayasimha, ruler of Daṇḍabhukti, who is said to have defeated the Utkala king Kaṇakeśarī, who most probably belonged to the Keśarī dynasty but whose name has not been found anywhere else.<sup>2</sup>

(4). Vikramarāja, ruler of Bāla-Vallabhī, adjacent to Devagrāma. The location of Bāla-Vallabhī is uncertain. Mr. N. N. Vasu identifies Devagrāma with a village of that name, 5 miles east of Ranaghat in Nadia.<sup>3</sup> There are many villages of the name of Devagrāma. It may be noted that Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, a minister of Harivarman, is styled Bāla-Vallabhujāṅga,<sup>4</sup> and the original home of his family was Siddhala in the Birbhum district.

(5). Laksmīśūra described as 'apāramandāra-madhusūdana and samasta-āṭavīka-sāmantacakra-cuḍāmaṇi'. Apāra-mandāra has been identified with the Mandāra hill in the Bhagalpur district.<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted that he is called a Sāmanta of the forest region.

(6). Śūrapāla of Kujavaṭī. Its identification is uncertain.

(7). Rudraśikhara of Tailakampa, which is perhaps represented by its non-sanskritized form Telakupī<sup>6</sup> in the Manbhum district.

(8). Mayagalasimha of Ucchala which cannot be located.

(9). Pratāpasimha of Dhekkariya, which is to be identified with modern Dhekur in the Burdwan district.

(10). Narasimhārjjūna of Kayaṅgal-maṇḍala which may be identified with Kankjol in the Rajmahal.

(11). Caṇḍārjjuna of Saṃkaṭagrāma. Its location is uncertain.

(12). Vijayarāja of Nidrāvala. Dr. H. C. Roychowdhury is

1. Rājanyakāṇḍa, v. 191.

2. DH., I, p. 412

3. Rājanyakāṇḍa, p. 198.

4. JASB., 1912, p. 841

5. IA, 1930, p. 244.

6. Cunningham, ASR., VII, p. 169,



able maternal uncle of kings. He conquered Devaraksita in war, maintained the glory of Rāmapāla, which rose in splendour because the obstruction by his foes was removed."<sup>1</sup> R. D. Banerjee<sup>2</sup> suggested that Devaraksita rose against the Pālas during the Kaivarta imbroglio but was subdued and then won over to the Pāla side by the marriage of his daughter Saṅkaradevī, mother or Kumāradevī.

In the commentary fourteen sāmantas are named, who took active part in the war against the Kaivarta chief Bhīma on the side of Rāmapāla. They are :—

(1). Bhīmayaśa, ruler Pīṭhī and Magadha, and described as 'Kānyakuvja-vājinīganṭhana-bhujāṅga'. Pīṭhī was the name of Bodh-Gaya and the neighbouring region.<sup>3</sup> If the above expression means any hostility to a Kānyakuvja king, he is to be identified with a Gāhaḍavāla king and not with Kalacuri Yaśaḥkarṇa as suggested by R. D. Banerjee.<sup>4</sup> Devaraksita preceded Bhīmayaśa on the throne of Pīṭhī and his daughter was married to Govindacandra. Gāhaḍavāla Madanapāla's inscriptions are dated from 1104 to 1109 A. D., and in his Rahan grant<sup>5</sup> the victories over the Gauḍa elephants are said to have been achieved by his son Govindacandra. It may be that Rāmapāla after the Kaivarta war made an attempt to extend his sway in the west but was checked by the rising power of the Gāhaḍavālas. The eastward advance of the Gāhaḍavāla power during the period 1124-1146 A. D. is indicated by the Maner and Lar plates. Govindacandra's fight with the kings of Vaṅga and Gauḍa is alluded to in the Prākṛt-paiṅgalam, a work on Prākṛta metrical science.<sup>6</sup> Govindacandra's contemporaries were Rāmapāla, Kumārapāla, Gopāla III. Madanapāla and Vijayasena.

(2). Viraguṇa of Koṭaṭavī, described as 'dakṣiṇa-simhasana-cakravartī'. Mr. N. N. Vasu identifies Koṭaṭavī with Koṭa-deśa in

1. EI., IX, p. 320.

2. JBORS., IV, p. 273.

3. IA., XV 111, p. 46.

2. Bl., d. 226.

4. Bl., p. 284.

6. IHQ., x1, p. 564 ff.



Sarkar Kaṭaka of the Āin-Āi-kbari.<sup>1</sup> Viraguṇa may be identified with Vīra of the Deopara praśasti, who was defeated by Vijayasena.

(3). Jayasimha, ruler of Daṇḍabhukti, who is said to have defeated the Utkala king Karṇakeśarī, who most probably belonged to the Keśarī dynasty but whose name has not been found anywhere else.<sup>2</sup>

(4). Vikramarāja, ruler of Bāla-Vallabhī, adjacent to Devagrāma. The location of Bāla-Vallabhī is uncertain. Mr. N. N. Vasu identifies Devagrāma with a village of that name, 5 miles east of Ranaghat in Nadia.<sup>3</sup> There are many villages of the name of Devagrāma. It may be noted that Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, a minister of Harivarman, is styled Bāla-Vallabhujaṅga,<sup>4</sup> and the original home of his family was Siddhala in the Birbhum district.

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(6). Śūrapāla of Kujavaṭī. Its identification is uncertain.

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(12). Vijayarāja of Nidrāvala. Dr. H. C. Roychowdhury is

1. Rājanyakāṇḍa, v. 191.

2. DH., I, p. 412

3. Rājanyakāṇḍa, p. 198.

4. JASB., 1912, p. 341

5. IA, 1930, p. 244.

6. Cunningham, ASR., VII, p. 169,



inclined to identify this chief with Vijayasena of the Sena dynasty<sup>1</sup>. If this is to be accepted, Nidrāvala is to be located in Rāḍha where the Senas were originally settled.

(13). Dvorapavardhana of Kauśambi. R. D. Bannerjee<sup>2</sup> surmised that Dvorapavardhana had been written in place of Govardhana through the mistake of the copist and was inclined to identify him with the chief of that name defeated by Jātavarman of the Varman dynasty. Kauśāmbī in the Puṇḍravardhanabhukti has been mentioned in the Belava plate and has been located in the Diamond Harbour sub-division.<sup>3</sup>

(14). Soma of Paduvana. Its location is uncertain.

The list of the sāmantas whose services were utilised by Rāmapāla and some of whose achievements have been described in the commentary gives an idea of the magnitude of the task that confronted him. Their support being won over, Rāmapāla collected the threefold army, the cavalry, the infantry and the elephants. With arrangements thus complete, Rāmapāla began the campaign and asked the Rāṣtrakūṭa prince Śivarāja to cross the Ganges with the vanguard and to assure the people that the property of the Brahmanas and religious endowments would not be interfered with in any way. True to the direction of Rāmapāla, Śivarāja kept himself informed of the property of the Brahmanas and the gods and expelled the front guards of Bhīma.<sup>4</sup> This was successful and thus the landing of the main army was made safe.

Rāmapāla at the head of the main army crossed the Ganges by a bridge of boats. Rājyapāla made all preparations for war and arranged the soldiers in customary arrays. The battle that ensued was one of the hottest that were fought in northern Bengal. Bhīma was captured on his elephant's back and kept under

1. IHQ., XIII, p. 358

2. BL., p. 277

3. SPP, 1939, B.S. pp. 80-81

4. We cannot accept the statement in the 'Rāmacarita' that Śivarāja delivered Varendra from the enemies. Then what was the necessity of the campaign of Rāmapāla at the head of the main army? It seems that Śivarāja made a cavalry raid and expelled the guards.



the charge of his son Vittapāla. His army broke up but his friend and general Hari collected the scattered army and made a desperate attack. Once more the battle was fierce. But the the Kaivarta army was finally routed.

Thus ended the Kaivarta revolt. Of late there has been much discussion as to its origin and nature. The occupation of Varendra by ousting the deep-seated Pāla power naturally rouses the suspicion that this revolution was organised on a large scale. Mr. A. K. Maitra<sup>1</sup> expressed the opinion that Divvoka, like Gopāla I, the founder of the Pāla power, was the chosen of the people. He went so far as to assert that he was elected king by the people and that the common people had a great share in determining the succession to the Pāla throne. The 'Rāmacarita' describes Rāmapāla as 'sarvasammata'<sup>2</sup> which he takes to mean "accepted by all", and from this Mr. Maitra concluded that Rāmapāla was the king-elect and Mahipāla II claimed the throne by the law of primogeniture. This was the underlying cause of the Kaivarta revolution. On this assumption he further concluded that Varendra as a whole was against that Pālas and Rāmapāla forced the Pāla rule against the declared voice of the people. The mainstay of the Pāla power was the popular support, and this was lost for ever. His opinion that Divvoka was elected by the people has been supported by R. P. Chanda<sup>3</sup> and Sir J. N. Sarkar.<sup>4</sup> But the crucial point is that if this would have really been the case, why the people did not elect Rāmapāla. If Rāmapāla was the chosen of the people, why after the death of Mahi-

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1. Lecture on the 'Fall of the Pāla empire' delivered by A. K. Maitra in the Calcutta University, a summary of which was published by Dr. R. C. Majumdar in the defunct Bengali journal 'Marmavāṇi', 1422 B. S.

2. Com. 'Rāmacaritra' 1/37. The word 'sarvasammata' actually occurs in connection with the reports of the evil-mongers and designing persons who reported Rāmapāla to be so to Mahipāla. Whether it was really so cannot be ascertained.

3. Modern Review, 1935, p. 347

4. Ibid., 1936, April issue.



pāla II the Kaivarta chief occupied the throne? This is the most important point which Mr. Maitra did not try to answer. Mahīpāla II was of suspicious nature and he deviated from the right course of action. His imprisonment of Śūrapāla and Rāmapāla can hardly be defended as a course of right judgment and was extremely impolitic because these two brothers would have stood by him in the impending danger. Divvoka has been described with the modest appellation 'bhṛtya'<sup>1</sup> which is perhaps to be taken in the sense of an officer of the Pālas. He was certainly not a Bachai Sako, as it is clear from the commentary that he enjoyed considerable power and was a man of much importance in the kingdom. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali<sup>2</sup> has drawn attention to certain passages in the commentary<sup>3</sup> which go to show that he began the action against Mahīpāla as a matter of duty with ulterior motives in his mind. When Mahīpāla II fought with Divvoka, the combined army of the 'sāmantas' was with the latter. It is therefore very very likely that the revolution at first broke out in favour of Rāmapāla because of Mahīpāla's unrighteous rule, or it was professed to be so, and subsequently Divvoka fished in the troubled waters. As it often happens that a revolution breaks out with certain end in view but is exploited by ambitious and designing men for their personal ends, the Kaivarta chief made himself master of the situation and usurped the throne. Discussing the whole episode, Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>4</sup> rightly observes that to rise against the ruling dynasty must always be regarded as an act of rebellion. The occupation of northern Bengal by the Kaivartas should be properly described as a political and military 'coup d'etat'.

1. Com. 1/38. Kāntā kamaṇīyā divyāhvayena Divyanāmnā Divvokena māṁsabhujā lakṣmya aiśānī bhujānena bhṛtyena uccaiḥ-darśakena uccaiḥ-mahatī daśā avasthā yasya atyucchrītenetyartha dasyūṇā śatrunā tad-bhāvā-pannātvāt avaśya-kartavyatayā āravdham karma vratam chadmanī vratī.

2. Bhāratvarṣa, 1343 B.S., pp. 32-41

3. Com. 1/38. quoted above. 4. Bhāratvarṣa, 1342 B. S., Āśāḍha issue.



After the recovery of his fatherland, Rāmapāla bent himself to lay the foundation of the Pāla kingdom more deeply by winning the love and affection of all people. He built a new capital which has since been associated with his name,—Rāmāvati<sup>1</sup> or Ramauti of the Muslim writers. He adorned this city with numerous Buddhist and Hindu images, the chief of which were Saura, Śaiva and Skānda. This must have produced profound impression on the people at large. True to the Pāla tradition, he established the famous Buddhist monastery of Jagaddala whose fame travelled far beyond the borders of Bengal. Besides, he built many temples and excavated canals and tanks.

Thus making the foundation of the Pāla power once more secure, Rāmapāla engaged his attention for glory abroad. Eastern Bengal seceded from the Pāla empire and a new independent power was established by the Varmans. The verse 44 (ch. III) states that a Varman king propitiated Rāmapāla by presenting him with his chariot and elephants. The Varman king referred to was probably Harivarman or Sāmalavarman, and thus eastern Bengal was once more brought within the Pāla sphere of influence. In course of his digvijaya Rāmapāla advanced as far as the sea-coast of Orissa<sup>2</sup> and reinstated the vanquished king of Utkala. Kāma-

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1. Rāmāvati was most probably included within the precincts of Gaṇḍa. ASIR., 1923-24, p. 79

2. Mr. A. K. Maitra takes 'bhavabhuṣana santati' used in this connection to refer to the Somavainśi kings of Orissa. Messrs. H. P. Shastri and R. D. Banerjee take it to refer to the Nāgavainśa. We are inclined to take the latter view because in verse 43 the word nāga actually occurs. It is not known who was the vanquished king reinstated by Rāmapāla. It may be mentioned that the Nāgavainśi kings ruled during the 11th century in the present Bastar state (EI., IX, pp. 161-64). Mr. N. G. Majumder conjectures from the word nāgāntaka applied to his minister Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva that the Nāgavainśi king was defeated by Harivarma but was favoured by Rāmapāla (IB., p. 80).



rūpa was also conquered by one of his generals.<sup>1</sup> These are clear indications of the revival of the lost supremacy of the Pālas over eastern India. In his old age Rāmapāla entrusted the task of the government to his son Rājyapāla and retired from active political life. When at Mongyr, he received the sad news of the death of his maternal uncle Mathanadeva to whom he owed so much of his political achievement and he died by immersing himself in the holy waters of the Ganges,<sup>2</sup> and this is confirmed by the 'Sekh-śubhodayā'.<sup>3</sup>

Rāmapāla was the last great Pāla king and was undoubtedly one of the greatest diplomats and statesmen of his age. He realised from the very beginning that the task that confronted him was by no means an easy one. He came to the wise and sane decision that without the help and support of the sāmantas it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to recover Varendra. A rash and hasty policy would have met with the fatal result of Mahīpāla's march against the Kaivarta chief. What by persuasion and what by promise of rewards the support of the vassals was secured. This is the clearest proof of his sobriety of judgment and diplomacy. In the actual war also he showed the qualities of a great general and statesman. His conduct and policy in the critical days of his life, as it can be gleaned from the incidental references in the commentary, reveal the statesmanlike traits of his character. He had the genius to organise and to execute marvellously. Far from being revengeful of the enemies, the officers of the Kaivarta king were appointed to high posts, thus making them loyal and grateful servants of the kingdom. He was wide in his sympathy

1. Kāmarūpa king overthrown by Rāmapāla was, according to Pandit P. Bhattacharyya, Dharmapāla of Brahmapāla's dynasty. According to K. L. Barua, he might have been Jayapāla of the Silimpur inscription (See Intro. Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī; also Early History of Kāmarūpa, Ch. on the dynasty of Brahmapāla). It is not improbable that Rāmapāla sent a general to subjugate the rebellious chief, Išvaraghoṣa who seems to have assumed an independent attitude during the Kaivarta revolt (see Ch. on Administration.)

2. Rāmacarita 4/8-18

3. S. K. Sen. Sekhśubhodayā, p. 46.



and tolerant in religious outlook. With him the sun of the Pāla power began to set down, never to rise again in splendour.

The Kaivarta rebellion had been quelled but the spirit of defiance was not extinguished. When the strong arm of Rāmapāla was not more, ambitious chiefs and rulers tried to raise their heads. During the reign of Kumārapāla, successor of Rāmapāla, two rebellions broke out. The Kamauli plate of Vaidyadeva describes vividly his naval battle in southern (anuttara-vaṅga) and the suppression of the revolt of Tiṁgyadeva of Kāmapūra. Vaidyadeva was at first a minister and general of Kumārapāla. The naval battle in southern Bengal most probably refers to a fight with a Varman king who tried to shake off the Pāla yoke established by Rāmapāla. No sooner had Vaidyadeva won this battle than the news of the revolt of Kāmarūpa reached him, and after a few days' rapid march he took Tiṁgyadeva by surprise. It was put down with a strong hand and a large number of people were slain and wounded. In the Kamauli plate Vaidyadeva assumed the imperial titles generally associated with an independent king. It seems that he asserted his independence at a later period. As his relation with Kumārapāla was very cordial (he is called a 'suhṛd and amātya'), he could not but mention his previous relation with the Pāla king whom he had served loyally. Nothing more is known of the reign of Kumārapāla except the exploits of Vaidyadeva whose personality overshadowed that of the king himself, and the 'Rāmacarita' dismisses his reign in one verse<sup>1</sup> only. Most probably he had a very short reign. It is likely that the invasion of Aṅga, Kaliṅga and Vaṅga by the Cālukya king Tribhuvanamalla Paramādideva, which is recorded in an inscription<sup>2</sup> of 1128 A. D., took place in his reign.

Kumārapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla III. Very recently an image of Sadāśiva has been discovered in the Dinajpur district and there is a votive inscription on the pedestal, recording that it was installed by Purṣottamadeva in the 14th year

1. 4/11

2. Ep. Carn., XI. p. 68



of Gopāladeva.<sup>1</sup> Its characters are almost similar to those of the Deopara praśasti of Vijayasena, and the king Gopāladeva is to be identified with Gopāla III. This identification goes to disprove the old view<sup>2</sup> that he had a very short reign and died in his childhood. He seems to have ruled at least for 14 years. The 'Rāmacarita' dismisses his reign in one verse<sup>3</sup> from which it appears that his enemies had a hand in his death which was not perhaps natural. The Manda inscription, which is to be assigned for palæographical reasons to Gopāla III, is full of so many scribal mistakes that no meaning can be made out of it confidently.<sup>3</sup> It seems that this record also refers to his enemies and one person named Mijum (?) fought for or stood by him. It is to be noted that it is a posthumous record.

Gopāla III was succeeded by Madanpāla, the last known king of the Pāla dynasty. He was the son of Rāmapāla by his queen Madanadevī. In his accession he was assisted by Mahāmāṇḍalika Candra of Aṅga, son of Suvarṇacandra.<sup>4</sup> Sandhyākaranandī describes Madanapāla as king with a religious bent of mind and as a liberal-minded man. He is said to have uprooted one Govardhana. The leader of the Nāga army was his ally and with his help he seems to have crippled the fortune of Hari.<sup>5</sup> A victory is also claimed in his favour over Kaliṅga. But whatever success he had, it seems that northern Bengal passed in the hands of Vijayasena

1. I am thankful to Mr. N. G. Majumder, Superintendent of Archaeological Survey (Eastern Circle), for kindly allowing me to examine the inscription. For an account of the inscription, see the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, dated May 14, 1937

2. *BL.*, p. 311

3. 4/12. 'Api śatrughṇa-upāyad Gopālaḥ svaḥ jagāma tatsmṛiḥ Hantu kumbhīnasya-astanavaisyā tasya sūmayikam-etat.

3. An attempt has been made to interpret this inscription by V. Vidyavinode. See *SPP*, 1319 B. S., pp. 153 ff. The reading and translation are highly conjectural. He reads 'sechyam' in the 3rd line and is of opinion that he gave up his life voluntarily. The word looks like 'sacya' and gives no meaning.

4. We agree with Dr. R. G. Basak in identifying Candra with the grandson of Mathanadeva. *IHQ.*, V, p. 85.

5. No commentary of the last part of the *Rāmacarita* has been discovered. We follow Mm. H. P. Shastri's interpretation,



during his reign. The Deopara praśasti states that the Sena king impetuously assailed the king of Gauḍa and also shows that at least southern Varendra was under him. The Manahali plate records grant of land by Madanapāla in the Puṇḍravardhanabhukti in his 8th regnal year. The Jayanagar image inscription goes to indicate that he ruled at least for 19 years in Bihar. Two other kings, Govindapāla and Palapāla, have been styled Gauḍeśvara,<sup>1</sup> but their relation with the Pāla dynasty is uncertain, and there is nothing to show that their authority extended over any part of Bengal, as all records alluding to their reign come from Magadha. Therefore it seems that Madanapāla was the last Pāla king of Bengal.

The Pālas were entangled in severe struggle with the Pratihāras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas from the very foundation of the empire. It seems that the struggle was keener and more long-drawn with the Pratihāras than with the latter. A close study of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Pāla records tends to show that the Pālas were politically or matrimonially allied with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. It was held by some scholars that Dhruva Dhārāvārṣa undertook his campaign against Vatsarāja as an ally of Dharmapāla, but this is to be given up in view of the direct mention of his encounter with the Gauḍa king in the 14th verse of the Sanjan plates. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa help was perhaps sought by Dharmapāla when he was defeated by Nāgabhaṭa II. The 23rd verse of the same record, which describes the northern campaign of Govinda III and his victory over Nāgabhaṭa II, informs us that Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha submitted to him of their own accord. The conclusion becomes more probable because Dharmapāla married Raṇṇādevī, daughter of a Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince named Parabala.<sup>2</sup>

1. Pālas of Bengal, pl. XXVII; JBORS, 1923, pp. 588 ff; IC., II, pp. 579 ff, IHQ, XIII, pp. 359-60.

2. This Parabala has not been yet definitely identified. One Parabala is known from the Pathari Pillar inscription (EI., IX, p. 249). Kielhorn read the date as 917 V. S.—861 A. D. which in his opinion is clear. It is impossible to verify it from the facsimile. It is to be noted that Parabala's date is dependent on that of Dharmapāla and not vice versa. Fleet expressed the opinion that Parabala is to be identified with Govinda III, but no virūda of Govinda III as such is known. Mr. R. D. Banerji was of opinion that Parabala of the Pathari inscription had a very long life and there is no difficulty in identifying him with Dharmapāla's father-in-law. (Bl., p. 196.)



The sixth Pāla king Rājyapāla married Bhāgyadevī, daughter of a Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince named Tuṅga. The identification of this Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince is also far from being certain. Rājyapāla ruled during C. 810-985 A.D., and the Pāla power was passing through the most critical days at this period, as the Pratihāras under Mahendrapāla occupied northern Bihar and Bengal. The strengthening of the Pāla power by a matrimonial alliance can be presumed. What is more important to notice is that in every official record of the Pālas after Rājyapāla this matrimonial alliance has been very prominently referred to, while Dharmapāla's marriage with Rannādevī is known from the Mongyr and Nālandā grants of Devapāla. Vighrahapāla I's marriage with the Kalacuri princess Iajjādevī is known only from the Bhagalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla. But Rājyapāla's marriage with Bhāgyadevī has been repeated in the genealogical account of the Pālas in every grant. It is quite probable that this marriage was of great political importance to the Pālas. Kielhorn suggested that Rājyapāla's father-in-law was Jagattuṅga, son of Kṛṣṇa II.<sup>1</sup> Jagattuṅga predeceased his son III and did not reign.<sup>2</sup> It cannot be ascertained whether the northern campaign of Indra III and his signal victory over the Pratihāra emperor Mahīpāla had something to do in connection with this matrimonial alliance. But it seems certain that this death-blow to the Pratihāras offered a good opportunity to the Pālas for the recovery of the lost possessions. Every Rāṣṭrakūṭa campaign against the Pratihāras, whether undertaken for their own sake or otherwise, was indirectly of great political advantage to the Pālas.

If the northern campaigns of Govinda III and Indra III are somewhat doubtful as of direct help to the Pālas, the evidence of the Rāmacarita of Sandhyākaranandī is conclusive of the fact that the

1. IA., XLVIII, p. III. Mr. N. N. Vasu identified him with Kṛṣṇa II himself who had also the title Tuṅga (VJI, Rājanya Kāṇḍa, p. 128). Mr. R. D. Banerj remarks that he is perhaps to be identified with Tuṅgadharmāvaloka whose inscription has been found at Bodhi-Gaya (R. L. Mitra, Buddha Gaya, p. 195, pl. XL.)

2. Dr. Altekar, Op. Cit., p. 99,



Rāṣṭrakūṭa branch of Magadha rendered incalculable service to the cause of the Pālas at one of the most critical junctures of their fortunes. Vighrahapāla III married a sister of Mathanadeva who was the right-hand man of Rāmapāla in his suppression of the Kaivarta revolt. The vanguard of Ramapāla's army was led by Mathanadeva's nephew Mahāpratihāra Śivarāja and his own sons Mahāmāṇḍalika Kāṇpuradeva and Suvarṇadeva also took an important part in that war. Madanapāla, the last known Pāla king of northern Bengal, was assisted in his succession by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince Candradeva.<sup>1</sup>

It seems therefore that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa alliance was the corner-stone of the Pāla foreign policy and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas directly or indirectly rendered great service to the Pāla empire from almost its foundation to the last day of its existence. But this intimate matrimonial and political relations did not prevent them from undertaking campaigns against Bengal or claiming suzerainty over the Pālas. The statement of the Muslim traveller Sulaiman<sup>2</sup> that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas compelled "every prince, though master in his own house, to pay homage to themselves" seem to be quite appropriate. Nor did the Pālas, if they found a favourable opportunity, felt any scruples to invade the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom. The defeat of a Drāviḍa king by Devapāla, who from his mother's side had Rāṣṭrakūṭa blood in him, most probably refers to a Rāṣṭrakūṭa king.

After the end of the triangular struggle among the Pālas, Pratihāras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the new powers like the Kalacuris, Candellas, Cālukyas and Paramāras carried on raids almost on every opportune occasion. Certainly some of these raids were accompanied with loots and plunders. Political and military glory might have been one of the leading motives but the more material and economic motive was not also perhaps absent. Whoever might have been the victor, these incessant raids were a great strain on the treasury of the Pālas.

1. *IHQ.*, V. p. 85

2. *Elliot, History of India, Vol. I, p. 7*



The constant and repeated foreign invasions were not the only scourge of the Pāla kingdom. It appears that the feudatories also took utmost advantage of the weakness of the central power to assume a defiant, if not almost independent, attitude. We know of two such cases in Magadha. Two records from Gaya<sup>1</sup> of the 15th year of Nayapāla introduce us to one Viśvāditya or Viśvarūpa,<sup>2</sup> son of Śūdraka and grandson of Paritoṣa. The family seems to have been devoted to religion and constructed temples and installed gods at Gaya. Nothing is known of its political status. Another Gaya inscription<sup>3</sup> of the 5th regnal year of Vīgrahapāla III describes Śūdraka in vague terms and records that Viśvarūpa destroyed his enemies. It is clear that he was a contemporary of Nayapāla and Vīgrahapāla III. In another Gaya record of Yakṣapāla (Viśvarūpa's son) Śūdraka is described as, "Śrī Śūdrakaḥ svayam-apūjad-indra-kalpa Gauḍeśvara nrpati-lakṣaṇa-pūjayāyam." Dr. H. C. Ray<sup>4</sup> takes it to mean that the lord of Gauḍa paid homage to Śūdraka, while Dr. R. C. Majumder<sup>5</sup> is inclined to take the expression to mean that the lord of Gauḍa formally honoured Śūdraka by investing him as king with proper ceremony. Whatever may be the meaning, it is clear that during the time of Nayapāla and Vīgrahapāla III, these pretensions were becoming higher and higher. To crown all, it is said at the end of the Gaya record of Yakṣapāla,<sup>6</sup> "Sūrya-candra māsau yāvat kṣaṇīṇi sasāgara tāvat śrī Yakṣapālasya rājantam bhuvī kīrttayaḥ" and there is no reference to any suzerain. It seems therefore that this family was assuming an attitude of independence in the Gaya region during or after the reign of Vīgrahapāla III.

The Govindapur praśasti of the poet Gaṅgādhara of 1137-28 A. D. introduces us to two princes of the Māna family, namely

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1. Gauḍalekhamālā, pp. 111 ff; Pālas of Bengal, p. 78
  2. They seem to be identical and it may be also possible that they were two brothers. Two records give two different names.
  3. Pālas of Bengal, pp. 81-82
  4. DH., I. p. 348
  5. DUS., No I, Pt II, p. 135
  6. Pālas of Bengal, p. 97



Magadharāja Varṇamāna and Rudramāna, who ruled towards the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century A. D.. It is not known what was the attitude of these two princes towards the Pālas. We have already noted that Devarakṣita of the Cikkore family and ruler of Pīṭhī, who was subdued by Mathanadeva, might have tried to secede from the Pāla kingdom. It seems that at the time of the Kaivarta revolt the Pāla feudatories of Magadha were assuming a semi-independent attitude. The history of eastern and western Bengal which will be narrated in the next chapter also shows the same state of things. The verses 1/37 and 1/38 of the Rāmacarita indicate that Divvōka was an officer of the Pālas, and the Sāmanta-cakra at first sided with him.

Taking a broader view of the Pāla history, it appears that from the tenth century onwards the Pāla power was collapsing. The disruptive tendencies and disintegrating forces were kept in check for the time being by the vigour and energy of Mahīpāla I and Rāmapāla, who tried to revive the Pāla suzerainty in eastern India and gave it a longer lease of life. It began to crumble after the death of Rāmapāla and the task devolved on the Karṇāṭa chief Vijayasena to found a united kingdom all over Bengal by suppressing all the disintegrating forces, and the death-knell of the tottering Pāla kingdom was rung by him.

## APPENDIX A

### Pāla Chronology

There have been much heated discussions<sup>1</sup> on Pāla and Sena chronologies. We need not repeat all the arguments and

1. For Pāla and Sena chronologies, see. JBORS., 1928, pp. 489-538; 1929, pp. 642-50; IA., 1930, XLIX, pp. 942-50; JASB, 1921, pp. 112; IHQ, 1927, pp. 571-91; 1929, pp. 133-37.



counter-arguments. We have based our study of the Pāla history on the following chronology :—

Kings.	Probable dates	Known reign-period
1. Gopāla	5. 750 A.D.	.....
2. Dharmapāla	„ 776-810 A. D.	32 years.
3. Devapāla	„ 810-850 „	39 „
4. Vighrahapāla I or Śūrapāla I	„ 850-855 „	3 „
5. Nārāyaṇapāla	„ 855-910 „	54 „
6. Rājyapāla	„ 910-935 „	24 „
7. Gopāla II	„ 935-970 „	35 (?) <sup>1</sup> „
8. Vighrahapāla II	„ 970	.....
9. Mahīpāla I	„ 980-1030 „	48 „

The definitely known date is 1026 A.D. of the Sarnath inscription of the reign of Mahīpāla I who is to be identified with Mahīpāla mentioned in the Tirumalai inscription because the Cola invasion took place in c.1025 A.D. The synchronisms of Dharmapāla, Cakrāyudha, Rāṣṭrakūṭa Govinda III (793-814 A.D.) and Pratihāra Nāgabhaṭa II (c. 807-33 A.D.) are established by the Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣa, the Gwalior inscription of Bhoja and the Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla. There are reasons to believe from a comparison of the Radhanpur and Wani plates that Dharmapāla and Cakrāyudha submitted to Govinda III between 807 and 808 A.D. If we subtract the sum total 230 of all the known reign periods from 1026, we get 796.

But 796 cannot be taken as the date of accession of Dharmapāla because of the following uncertain factors. The date 1026 A. D. might not have been the last date of Mahīpāla I, and the unknown reign-periods of all monarchs (of Vighrahapāla II's

1. As regards Gopāla II's reign-period, he is said to have reigned 'cirataram', most probably in comparison with his father Rājyapāla's reign-period, which is 24 years. I agree with R. D. Banerjee in reading the date in the Maitreya Vyākaraṇa as 17 and not 57 or 11 as suggested by Mm. H. P. Shastri and Prof. Bhandarkar; see photograph and discussion, JBORS, 1928, pp. 489ff.



reign-period nothing is known ) have not been taken into account. Taking 808 A. D. as the 32nd year of Dharmapāla's reign, we cannot push his acceesion before 776 A. D. This uncertain period cannot be very long ( 796-776 = 20 years ). Taking all factors into casideration, it seems that Mahīpāla I's last date is not very far from 1026 A. D.

The prodable reign-periods of other Pāla kings may be fixed in this way :—

10. Nayapāla	c. 1030-1045 A.D.	15 years
11. Vighrahapāla III	„ 1045-1072 „	26 „
12. Mahīpāla II	.....	.....
13. Śūrapāla II	.....	.....
14. Rāmapāla	c. 1080-1123 „	42 years.
15. Kumārapāla	.....	.....
16. Gopāla III	„ 1125-1139 „	14 years.
17. Madanapāla	„ 1139-1158 „	19 years.
? Govindapāla	„ 1162 „	.....
? Palapāla	.....	35 years.

Atiśa Dipaṅkara went to Tibet during the reign of Nayapāla in c. 1038 A.D. Nayapāla and Vighrahapāla III were contemporaries of Kalacuri Karṇa ( c.1040-70 A.D. ). A Gaya inscription is dated in 1232 V.E., which is referred to as “ Śrī Govindapāladeva-gata-rājya-caturdaśa-samvatsare”, i-e., the 14th year having passed since the end of his reign. This places the end of his reign in 1162 A.D.. It is possible that Govindapāla and Madanapāla ruled contemporaneously in two parts of Magadha. It appears from the ‘Rāmacarita’ that Mahīpāla II, Śūrapāla II and Kumārapāla had very short reigns. It is quite possible that Śūrapāla II and Rāmapāla ruled contemporaneously with Kaivarta Divvoka and Bhīma in different parts of Bengal and Magadha. Of course it is true that after a certain period of his reign Rāmapāla ousted Bhīma from Varendra. Again, it is also possible that Vijayasena ruled contemporaneously with Rāmapāla, Gopāla III and Madanapāla.



## CHAPTER V

### Independent Dynasties in Vaṅga and Rāḍha

The history of south-eastern Bengal in the eighth century is almost dark. The unfinished Chittagong plate of Kāntideva does not throw much light on the political condition. From palaeographical considerations Kāntideva may be placed in the period 750-851<sup>1</sup> A. D.. Like the Kedarpur plate of Śrīcandra, it is a peculiar record in which the object of its issue has not been mentioned and goes to strengthen the view that the common (metrical) portion of copper plate grants made by the same king used to be inscribed previously, the formal grant being inscribed on the actual occasion. It was issued from Vardhamānapura which cannot be satisfactorily identified.<sup>2</sup> Kāntideva's father Dhanadatta and grandfather Bhadradata became powerful by victories in battles. His title is Parameśvara and Mahārājadhirāja and the inscription comes to an abrupt close by an address to the future kings of Harikela-maṇḍala.<sup>3</sup> It seems therefore that his power was confined to a small principality.

In one of his latest papers<sup>4</sup> R. D. Banerjee expressed the opinion that eastern Bengal did not possibly form a part of the Pāla kingdom before the reign of Mahīpāla I. This remark seems to be correct inasmuch as there is no definite evidence of Pāla

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1. Modern Review, 1922, p. 612.

2. Dr. R. G. Basak locates Vardhamānapura in Burdwan. This would make Kāntideva a king of western Bengal. But as he addresses the king's of Harikela-maṇḍa, it seems that he had some authority over Harikela which, in our present state of knowledge, should be located in eastern Bengal. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali conjectures that Vardhamānapura is identical with Vikramapura, but there is no evidence to support it. *IHQ*, 11, pp. 822-25.

3. For location, see Ante,

4. Ashutosh Silver Jubilee Volume, *Orientalia*. At. 111., p. 221.



authority over eastern Bengal in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. But some indirect references tend to show that Vaṅga was probably included within the kingdom of Dharmapāla and Devapāla. In the Gwalior praśasti<sup>1</sup> of Bhoja it is stated that Nāgabhaṭa defeated Cakrāyudha and the lord of Vaṅga who is to be identified with Dharmapāla. Alluding to the same incident in the Baroda plates<sup>2</sup> of Kakka it is said that the Pratihāra king (Nāgabhaṭa II) humbled Gauḍendra and Vaṅgapati by which perhaps the same person (Dharmapāla) was meant. But it must be admitted that the terms Gauḍa and Vaṅga have been somewhat loosely used in the contemporary Pratihāra and Rāṣṭrakūṭa records. The land granted by the Khalimpur grant was in Vyāgrataṭi-maṇḍala within the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, and Bālavarman, the governor of that maṇḍala, was the dūtaka of the Nālandā grant of Devapāla. Vyāgrataṭi has been identified with Vāgḍi (the delta of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra) on phonetic grounds.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing definite to show the extension of the Pāla power over Vaṅgāla.

If the establishment of the Pāla suzerainty over Vaṅga is somewhat problematical, it is certain that during the earlier part of the tenth century Bengal was under an independent dynasty. The Bharella Naṭṭeśvara<sup>4</sup> image inscription acquaints us with a king named Layahacandra who is to be palaeographically assigned to the beginning of the 10th century. His capital was at Karma-manta which has been identified with Bad-Kamta in the Tippera district. It is known from the Rampal, Kedarpur, Dhulla and Edilpur plates of Śrīcandra that a line of kings with their names ending in Candra ruled in eastern Bengal. The names of Purna-candra, Suvarṇacandra and Trailokyacandra are known. Śrīcandra has been assigned to the 10th century and seems to have preceded Mahīpāla I.<sup>5</sup> The title Mahārājādhirāja has been applied to

1. EI., XVI11, pp. 101 ff.

2. IV, XI11, p. 160.

3. Sir Ashutosh Silver Jubilee Volume, *Orientalia*, pt. 1, pp. 423-24.

4. EI. XVII, p. 350.

5. Sir Ashutosh Silver Jubilee Volume, *Orientalia*, Pt. 111, pp. 221 ff.



Trailokyacandra who had been at first a ruler of Harikela and extended his authority over Candradivpa.<sup>1</sup> It is stated in the Rampal plate that the Candras were originally rulers of Rohitagiri. Messrs. R. D. Banerjee<sup>2</sup> and N. G. Majumdar<sup>3</sup> are inclined to identify it with Rhotasgarh in the Shahabad district of Bihar. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali suggests its identification with the Lalmai Hills in Tippera,<sup>4</sup> and Mr H. D. Mitra, with Rangamati in the Hill Tippera.<sup>5</sup> The existence of a line of Candra kings for 19 generations in Arakan<sup>6</sup> and the extension of Arakan power over Chittagong<sup>7</sup> in the 9th century go to support the eastern origin of the family of Śricandra. The gradual extension of the Candra power from Harikela to Candradivpa and then to Vaṅga also strengthens the view of their eastern origin. Though no lineal connection can yet be established between Layahacandra, the family of Śricandra and the Arakan Candra dynasty, the probability of such a connection is strong.

The Baghaura image inscription goes to show that Samataṭa acknowledged the suzerainty of Mahīpāla I in his third regnal year. It is learnt from the Tirumulai inscription that sometime about 1025 A. D. the Cola army under a general of Rājendra Cola defeated Govindacandra of Vaṅgāleśa. It is quite likely that Govindacandra belonged to the Candra family and it seems that the Candras were pushed eastward by Mahīpāla I in Vaṅgāla (their original land?).

Another independent power was established in eastern Bengal

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1. Mr. N. G. Majumdar takes Trailokyacandra as the king of Harikela which included Candradivpa (IB, p. 3). This conclusion is based on the following passage,—“Ādhāro Harikela-rājakakuda smitanām-śriyaṁ yaścandropāde babluva nṛpatir dvīpe dilipopamaḥ.” But to take Trailokyacandra originally to be king of Harikela from which position he became king of Candradivpa seems to us a better conclusion.

2. BI, p. 233

3. IB, p. 3

4. IHQ, III, p. 418

5. IHQ, II, pp. 313, 665

6. ASIR, 1929-27, pp. 146-48; IHQ, 1931, p. 37

7. Chittagong Gazetteer, p. 20



about the middle of the eleventh century. It is stated in the Belava plate of Bhojavrman that the Varmans originally belonged to Simhapura which has been identified by some scholars with Simhapura in Kalinga, and by R. D. Banerjee, with Simhapura of the Lakhamandala inscription in the Panjab, and by Dr. R. G. Basak, with Sihapura in Rāḍha mentioned in the Mahāvamśa.<sup>1</sup> The real founder of the political fortunes of the Varman family was Jātavarman, a contemporary of Vigrahapā'a III. He is said to have spread his paramount sovereignty by marrying Viraśrī, daughter of (Kalacuri) Karṇa, by extending his dominion over Aṅga, by crippling the Kāmarūpa king, Divya and Govardhana. It is to be particularly noted that in the 8th verse<sup>2</sup> of the Belava plate where the military and political activities of Jātavarman are described, great stress has been first laid on his marriage with Viraśrī, daughter of Karṇa, and it seems that this marriage has got something to do with his military conquests. Again, although no connected meaning can be made out of the broken Vajrayogini plate of Sāmalavarman, from the way in which the words Kalacuri and Mātṛvāmśya occur it can be surmised that this marriage of Jātavarman was perhaps a great factor in determining the political fortunes of the Varman family. It may be therefore held that the Varmans came in the wake of Kalacuri Karṇa's invasions during the troubled period of the Kaivarta revolt or shortly before it.

The position of Harivarman in the chronology and genealogy of the Varmans was so long controversial, but the evidence of the broken Vajrayogini plate shows that he is to be placed between Jātavarman and Sāmalavarman. The recovery of the lost Samantasara plate of Harivarman enables us to verify the name of his father, which was read by Mr. N. N. Vasu as Jyotivarman. Its defaced condition prevents us from being definitely certain, as the

1. IB., p. 16. Dr. D. C. Ganguli is also inclined to identify Simhapura with Sihapura in Rāḍha, see IHQ, XI-1, pp. 605ff. also XI-1, pp. 153ff.

2. This begins the description of Jātavarman's political conquests:—  
"pariṇayan-Karṇasya-Viraśrīyam-yoṅāsu-prathayani-paribhanani-stām-Kāmarūpa-śrīyam..."



letters in question are very indistinct, but it seems that the name is to be read as Jātavarman<sup>1</sup>. In the Nagpur praśasti<sup>2</sup> of the Paramāra kings it is stated that Lakṣmadeva (1086-1094 A. D.) first proceeded to Hari's quarters and entered the town of the lord of Gauḍa. Hari's quarters have been generally taken to mean east, but it may refer to the kingdom of Harivarman. The 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā. Prājñapāramitā' was copied in his 19th year, and a commentary on 'Kāla-cakra-yāna' was written in the 23rd year of Harivarmadeva<sup>3</sup>. He had a long reign and probably ruled contemporaneously with Rāmapāla. From the Bhuvanesvara praśasti of his minister Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva and from the Vajrayogini plate it appears that he had a son who distinguished himself in battles, but it is not clear whether this son actually ruled. It is important to notice that there is no mention of Harivarman and his son in the Belava plate in which Jātavarman seems to have been succeeded by his son Sāmalavarman. The foundation of the Varman power did not go unchallenged by the Pālas. The presentation of an elephant and the chariot by a Varman king of the east and the victorious naval battle of Vaidyadeva in southern Bengal indicate that the Varmans were occasionally compelled to acknowledge the Pāla suzerainty<sup>4</sup>, though they assumed imperial titles in their own records and were ready to cast off the yoke at every opportune moment. The last known Varman king is Sāmalavarman's son Bhojavarman by Trailokyasundarī, the daughter of the Paramāra king Jagaddeva. The Varmans were most probably ousted from Vikrampura by Vijayasena.

The recently published Irda plate of the Kamboja king Naya-pāladeva raises many important and interesting problems. It

1. I am thankful to Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, Curator of the Dacca Museum, for kindly allowing me to examine the plate. Dr. Bhattasali also agrees with me in reading the name. See Bhāratvarsa, 1344 B. S., Phalgun issue.

2. EI, 11, p. 193, v. 28.

3. SPP., 1327 B.S. Pl. 2, No. 3. Mm. H. P. Shastri read the date as 99 but it seems to be 32.

4. See Ante.



introduces us to Kamboja-vaṁśa-tilaka Rājyapāla and to his two sons Nārāyaṇapāla and Nāyapāla by queen Bhāgyadevī. The grant was issued from the capital (rājadhani) Priyaṅgu, and the land donated was situated in Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala within the Vardhamāna-bhukti. The Tirumalai inscription mentions Daṇḍabhukti after Oḍḍa-viṣaya and Kośala-nāḍu and before Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍha. As it was within Vardhamāna-bhukti, late Mr. R. D. Banerjee's<sup>1</sup> opinion that Daṇḍabhukti is roughly represented by Midnapore and Balasore districts seems to be to the mark.

Palæographically Nayapāladeva is to be assigned to the tenth century. The names of the princes of the Irda plate end in Pāla, and moreover, Rājyapāla ( of the Pāla dynasty ), father of Gopāla II, married Bhāgyadevī which is the name of the mother of Kamboja Nayapāladeva. It is therefore tempting to hold that this family was a branch family of the Pālas. Mr. N. G. Majumdar,<sup>2</sup> who first held this proposition 'quite unlikely', writes in a recent note<sup>3</sup> that it is 'very likely'. Again, it may be pointed out that Devapāla, the 3rd Pāla king, had a son of the name of Rājyapāla who was the crown prince and dūtaka at the time of his issuing of the Mongyr plate, and we have already referred to the theory of a palace revolution after the death of Devapāla<sup>4</sup>. The acceptance of the view that the princes of the Irda plate belong to a branch family of the Pāla dynasty would support the theory of late Dr. Hoernle,<sup>5</sup> who long ago held that after Nārāyaṇapāla ( of the Pāla dynasty ) two rival lines of Pāla kings were ruling in two parts of Bengal owing to internal dissensions.

But there are serious objections against this view which should not be overlooked. The princes of the Irda plate belonged to the Kamboja-vaṁśa (v. 6). The Pālas are nowhere described as

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1. Pālas of Bengal, pp. 71, 89 ; B1, p. 248.
  2. EI, XXII, p. 152.
  3. Modern Review, 1937, September issue, pp. 323-24
  4. See Ante. Devapāla's reign
  5. IA, XIV, pp. 165 ff.



Kambojas. The coincidences of the names of Rājyapāla and Bhāgvadevī may be accidental. If two Rājyapālas are to be identified, it is to be accepted that Gopāla II had two brothers, namely Nārāyaṇapāla and Nayapāla, who subscribed to the Brahmanical faith. At the present state of our knowledge it seems better to take the prince of the Kamboja family of the Irda plate as belonging to a separate line and the assumption of imperial titles by Rājyapāla and Nayapāla indicates that they were independent kings. The Kamboja king who has been styled Gauḍapati in the Dinajpur pillar inscription and whose occupation of northern Bengal has been perhaps described in Banagar grant of Mahīpāla I as "pitryaṁ rājyaṁ-anadhikṛta" most probably belonged to this family. The king Dharmapāla of Daṇḍabhukti mentioned in the Tirumalai inscription was possibly another ruler of this family.

The question how this family came into power in extreme south-western Bengal cannot be satisfactorily solved. During the reign of Aśoka the Kambojas along with the Yonas were in the north-western frontier of India.<sup>1</sup> The same position is given to the Kambojas and Yavanas in the Mahābhārata, and the Kamboja country was famous for its good breed of horses.<sup>2</sup> The same thing has been mentioned in the Mongyr grant of Devapāla where it is said that his horses met their old mates in Kamboja in course of his military campaigns. There was also a Kambojadeśa in eastern India<sup>3</sup> which has been indentified with Lushai tracts between Bengal and Burma. There is yet no clue to connect this ruling Kamboja family with Kamboja countries in western or eastern India.

The Tirumalai inscription records that the Cola army after killing Dharmapāla of Daṇḍabhukti, defeated Raṇaśūra of Dakṣiṇa-

1. Bhandarkar, Aśoka, p. 32.

2. JRAS, 1912, p. 256; Arthaśāstra, II, 30. For detailed description of the Kambojas see Dr B. C. Law, 'Some Kṣatriya tribes of Ancient India', pp. 230-51,

3. DH, I, pp. 308-9; EI XXII, p. 158.



Rāḍha, Govindacandra of Vaṅgādesa and Mahīpāla of Uttara-Rāḍha. The controversy<sup>1</sup> that has been raised whether this Tāmil record or the Trivalangadu plates give the correct route of the Cola army is to be closed after the definite location of Daṇḍabhukti from the evidence of the Irda plate. The Trivalangadu plates state that the defeat of Raṇasūra took place before the discomfiture of Dharmapāla, and this cannot be accepted in view of the geographical position of Daṇḍabhukti and Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍha. Prof. Nilkanta Shastri<sup>2</sup> correctly observes that the Tāmil 'praśasti' (Tirumalai) which was recorded almost immediately after the campaign must be accepted as more authentic, and he continues, "The language of the Tāmil inscriptions appears to suggest, *what seems otherwise*, that Mahīpāla had a sort of supremacy over the other chiefs named in this context and that the overthrow of Dharmapāla, Raṇasūra and Govindacandra led to the final struggle in which Mahīpāla was captured." We have got no knowledge of Tāmil and what he says from the point of the language of this record we are not in a position to judge; but by 'what seems otherwise' he refers to R. D. Banerjee's opinion that Bengal was divided into many independent principalities at the time of the Cola invasion. We think that this view still holds good and should not be changed until some other stronger proof can be adduced to replace it. The other view would mean that Mahīpāla I was the king of almost the whole of Bengal and Bihar in their present geographical denomination, as the Baghaura and Imadpur image inscriptions go to show.

Raṇasūra of Dakṣiṇa-Rāḍha raises the question of the existence of the Sūra dynasty of which so much is heard in genealogical books and traditions, but very little is known of them from reliable documents. The first member is said to have been Adisūra who is one of the central figures of the social history of Bengal. We have tried to show elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that Adisūra of the Kulaśāstras

1. JRAS, 1935, pp. 655-66, pp. 59-79.

2. The Colas, pp. 251-52.

3. See Chapter IX, Brahmana Immigrations in Bengal.



may be identified with Magadhādhirāja Ādisimha of the Dudhpani rock inscription of the 8th century A. D. The genealogical books preserve a tradition that the Brahmanical Śūras were forced to take shelter in Rāḍha after the establishment of the Buddhist Pāla power.<sup>1</sup> The names of Bhūśūra, Mādhavaśūra, Ādityaśūra, Yāminiśūra, Varendraśūra, Pradyumṇaśūra, Anuśūra and Bhānuśūra are known from the Kulagranthas. The genealogy of the Varmans and Senas as given in them have proved to be false and unreliable. It is not therefore safe to construct the dynastic history of the Śūras and not even their genealogy, relying on their accounts. Occasionally the names of Śūra princes are found in inscriptions and contemporary literature. A pillar from Rajaona bears an inscription<sup>2</sup> in the 7th-8th century characters with the word 'Raṇa-śūrasya'. Lakṣmīśūra of the Rāmacarita was the ruler of Apāramandāra. Vijayasena married Vilāsadevī who has been described as Śūrakulāmbodhi. All these would point to the existence of a Śūra family, though nothing is known definitely of the extent of their territory or political status. The evidence of the Tirumulai inscription and the Rāmacarita would indicate that they raised their heads during the rule of weak Pāla kings but were forced to accept the position of sāmantas when there was a strong Pāla king.

We have seen that the kingdoms of some of the sāmantas who fought for Rāmapāla may be located in Rāḍha and there cannot be any doubt about the location of Jayasimha of Daṇḍabhukti. The sāmantacakra (the whole body of feudatories) who fought on his side may be regarded as hereditary feudatories of the Pālas in normal circumstances. At the time of the out-break of the Kaivarta revolt, the sāmanta-cakra was against Mahīpāla II,<sup>3</sup> and it was due to the resourcefulness of Rāmapāla that they were persuaded to make common cause with him.

1. VJI, Rājanya Kāṇḍa, p. 121.

2. Cunningham, ASR III, pl. XI.V.

3. Rāmacartia, 1/31 ; 1/29.



Taking all facts into consideration, it must be said that it is too hazardous to conclude that either Vaṅga and Rāḍha were included within the Pāla kingdom or they were separate political entities. In the 10th century when the Pāla power was at its lowest ebb, both in eastern and western Bengal we find the existence of two independent kingdoms. There is no definite evidence to prove the establishment of Pāla power in Vaṅga before Mahīpāla I and also in Rāḍha. With the accession of Mahīpāla I there was an attempt to extend the Pāla power over eastern Bengal, if not over western Bengal also, as the evidence of the Bāghaura image inscription and the Tīrumalai inscription tends to show. During the Kaivarta imbroglio the Varmans founded a kingdom in eastern Bengal. But again Rāmapāla tried to establish Pāla suzerainty over the Varmans. If there was no permanent and direct authority of the Pālas over Vaṅga and Rāḍha, there were occasional attempts to bring them under their sphere of influence. But it is also clear that the Pāla power was more firmly rooted in northern Bengal and Bihar than in Vaṅga and Rāḍha. All records pointing to their authority excepting the Baghaura inscription have been found in Magadha and Varendra. The rise of the Candras, Varmans, Kambojas and Senas ( who were at first settled in Rāḍha ) makes it emphatically clear. There was an invasion of Varendra by a Vaṅgāla king, and it seems that a Kamboja king ousted Vīgrahapāla II from his throne. Vaṅga and Rāḍha were ready to set at naught the Pāla yoke at every opportune moment and to utilise the weakness of the Pāla kings.

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## CHAPTER VI

### The Sena Dynasty

The Senas originally belonged to the Karṇāṭa country. It is stated in the Deopara praśasti and Madhainagar grant that the remote ancestor of the Senas was the Deccan king Virasena. Mr. R. Chakravarti<sup>1</sup> is inclined to identify him with Virasena of the south, mentioned in the Sahyādri Khaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa. Mr. A.K. Maitra was of opinion that he is to be identified with Virasena, father of king Nala of the Mahābhārata.<sup>2</sup> Dr. R. C. Majumdar<sup>3</sup> draws attention to a line of Jaina teachers (whose names end with Sena) of the Dharwar district which was the heart of the Karṇāṭa country—

Kumārasena	.....
Virasena	C.850-903 A. D.
Kanakasena	.....
Ajitasena	C. 950-975 A. D.
Brahmasena	.....
Aryasena	C. 1060-1045 A. D.
Mahāsena	.....

There is no definite evidence to connect the Senas of Bengal with the line of these Jaina teachers, and it is difficult to believe that all the Senas of Karṇāṭa were Jains.

R. D. Banerjee<sup>4</sup> held that the ancestors of the Senas came to

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1. Gauḍera Itihāsa, p. 156.

2. In various parts of India kings of the name of Virasena are to be found. In the Harṣacrita there are references to two Virasenas—one is the king of Kaliṅga and another of the Sauvīras. In the Vallālarita it is said that Virasena descended from the epic hero Karna and came to Gauḍa from Aṅga.

3. Transactions and Proceedings of the Oriental Conference, 1922, p. 343.

4. BL., p. 251 ; Prabāsi, 1913 B. S., pp. 396 ff.



Bengal in the train of the Cola invasion. In the Deopara praśasti it is said that Sāmantasena, grandfather of Vijayasena, "singly slaughtered the wicked robbers of the wealth of Kaṇṇāṭa, overrun by hostile tribes" (v. 8). The relation between the Kaṇṇāṭas and the Colas was far from being friendly. In order to solve the difficulties involved in this suggestion he presumed that after the defeat of the Cālukya king Jayasimha II by Rājendra Cola some Kaṇṇāṭa soldiers took service in the Cola army and accompanied it in the Cola expedition in Bengal. The enemy against whom Sāmantasena fought was Mahīpāla I of the Pāla dynasty whom R. D., Banerjee identified with Mahīpāla of the drama 'Caṇḍakauśikam' by Kṣemīśvara. Mr. J. M. Roy<sup>1</sup> supported this view by pointing out that in the 5th verses of the Sunderban, Anulia and Tarpandighi grants of Lakṣmanasena the city of Kāncī has been referred to as the ornament of southern India. Dhoyī in his 'Pavana-dūtam' gives a glowing picture of Kāncī. Recent discussions<sup>2</sup> on 'Mahīpāla of Caṇḍakauśikam' have shown that his identification with the Pāla king cannot be maintained, and in all reasonableness he is to be identified with the Pratihāra king Mahīpāla. The Cola army was not defeated by Mahīpāla I, as the evidence of the Tirumalai inscription is definite on that point. There is nothing to show that Mahīpāla I of the Pāla dynasty came into conflict with the Kaṇṇāṭas.

R. P. Chanda<sup>3</sup> drew attention to the 3rd verse of the Naihati plate where it is said that of the lunar family ( the Senas belonged to the lunar race ) many kings ruled in Rāḍha and in that family was born Sāmantasena. Owing to the apparent contradiction in the statements in the Deopara and Naihati inscriptions he presumed that Rāḍha was under the suzerainty of the Cālukyas and the predecessors of the Senas governed this remote possession. Mr Chanda was of opinion that the origin of the Senas is to be

1. Dhākāra Itihāsa, p. 309.

2. Journal of Oriental Research, Madras, VI, pp. 191 ff ; IC, II p. 354, 797 ; IHQ, XIII, p. 149.

3. Gaṇḍarājainalā, p. 46-7.



connected with the exploits of the Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI. Sāmantasena was engaged in fighting the enemies of Karṇāṭa in Rāḍha. We think that too much importance should not be attached to the 3rd verse of the Naihati plate of Vallālasena in all its details. It is admitted by all that before Vallālasena the Senas were settled in Bengal at least for three generations. The court panegyrist could then easily compose a verse by proclaiming that many princes of the family of his patron adorned Rāḍha. It appears from the description of the heroic activities of Sāmantasena that they took place in Karṇāṭa. He is said to have carried his victorious arms as far as the Adam's bridge and punished the spoilers of the fortunes of the Karṇāṭa country and in his old age retired on the banks of the Ganges.<sup>1</sup> While we are thus inclined to differ with Mr. Chanda in regarding Sāmantasena as the first settler of the Sena family in Rāḍha, the probability of his coming in the train of a Cālukya invasion seems to be strong. We have already referred to the Cālukya invasions of Bengal by Someśvara I, Someśvara II and Vikramāditya VI. Towards the close of the 11th century we find Nānyadeva,<sup>2</sup> admittedly another Karṇāṭa chief, ruling in Mithilā and Nepālā. The proud way of styling themselves Karṇāṭa-Kṣatriyas by the Senas in their own records and the marriage of Vallālasena with a Cālukya princess point to connect the establishment of the Sena power in Bengal with the exploits of a Karṇāṭa king, be he Someśvara I or Vikramāditya VI.

The Senas claim descent from the lunar race, and it is said that Sāmantasena belonged to the head-garland of the clans of Brahma-Kṣatriyas (Brahma-Kṣatiryanāṁ Kulaśirodāma). Kielhorn translated the phrase "Brahma-Kṣatriyas" as "the class of the Brahmana and the Kṣatriyas."<sup>3</sup> Prof. Bhandarkar<sup>4</sup> takes this

1. Deopara prasasti, vs., 1-9

2. IHQ, 1931. pp. 681ff.

3. The term Brahmapakṣatra has been used in this sense in the Rāmāyana (Bālakāṇḍa, 13, 7; Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa, 39, 17). But this has been used in the genealogical accounts of the Bhāgavata (9 skandha, 22 adhyāya, 44 st.) and in the Viṣṇupurāṇa (4th Amśa) to mean a person born of a Brahmana and Kṣatriya parentage.

4. JASB, 1909, p. 186



expression to refer to a family having priestly and martial energy and says that the Brahma-Kṣatriyas were originally Brahmana classes of new tribes who afterwards turned Kṣatriyas, before their final merging into the Hindu society. In western India a caste called Brahmakṣatri still exists, and as the Senas came from Karṇāṭa, it is quite likely that they became known as Brahmakṣatriyas when they began to wield political and military power.

Hemantasena was the son of Sāmantasena, and in the Deopara praśasti the title Mahārājñī has been applied to his wife Yaśodevī. In the Barrackpore plate the title of Hemantasena is Mahārājādhirāja. It is very likely that Hemantasena had some pretension to royal dignity.

The real founder of the political fortunes of the Senas in Bengal was his son Vijayasena. His Barrackpore plate is dated in the 62nd regnal year. The recent attempt to fix the Sena chronology<sup>1</sup> on astronomical grounds also shows that Vijayasena like his contemporary, Coḍagaṅga of Kalinga, had an unusually long reign. Therefore the suggestion to identify the sāmantarāja Vijayarāja of Nidrāvala of the Rāmacarita cannot be set aside for chronological difficulties. A pillar with the figure of the goddess Manasā with an inscription, "Rājena Śrī-Vijayase," has been found at Paikore in the Birbhum district. This 'Vijayase' is generally identified with Vijayasena. The Senas were at first settled in Rāḍha and this inscription indicates to locate their original territory in the Birbhum district. Paikore is almost near to the bank of the Ganges, where it meets the Padmā—a place of great strategic value perhaps to Rāmapāla in his war against the Kai-vartas and also to Vijayasena in his war against the Gauḍa king. It seems that the 17th, 18th and 19th verses of the Deopara praśasti in a veiled but clever manner refer to the part played by Vijayasena in helping Rāmapāla to recover Varendra and this established his future claim to the throne of Gauḍa, when there arose a dispute regarding it. The poet Umāpatidhara was an adept in

1. IC, IV, p 227



playing with words and it is difficult to comprehend clearly what he actually drove at. In the 17th verse Vijayasena is compared with Rāma and Arjuna and his arms to theirs. In the 18th verse 'divy-aḥ bhuva' has been used, recalling 'divya-ṛṣaya' of the Rāmacarita. The 19th verse has been translated thus<sup>1</sup>: "By him who gave away land in heaven to his rival princes and accepted (from them) the earth in return, the sword-blade marked the writing in the blood of heroes was made to serve the purpose of document, as it were, in anticipation, otherwise how could earth come to be enjoyed by him when there arose disputes regarding her and presenting his drawn sword the host of his opponents would admit defeat." If it be true that Vijayasena helped Rāmapāla against the Kaivartas, there was no question of rivalry with the Pālas at that time, but at a later period when Vijayasena was aspiring after the Gauḍa kingdom, the Pāla king was certainly his rival. This is perhaps what is meant by giving land to a 'pratipakṣa' (rival) king which most probably refers to a Pāla king. There is no doubt that there arose a dispute for the throne of Gauḍa in which the sword and might of Vijayasena decided the issue.

In the next verse is given a list of the chiefs and kings with whom the Sena king came into conflict and all of whom were probably aspirants after the Pāla throne. The first king referred to is Nānya who is to be identified with Nānyadeva of Mithilā, who ascended the throne in 1097 A.D.. A commentary on Bharata's Nāṭya-śāstra written by king Nānyadeva has come to light,<sup>2</sup> and in addition to the high-sounding titles he is said to have broken the powers of Gauḍa and Vaṅga kings. Both Vijayasena and Nānyadeva were Karnatic in origin. It may be that they at first followed a concerted action. But the Deopāra inscription shows that they came into conflict in which the Sena

1. We follow Mr. N. G. Majumdar's translation of the verse. Attention was first drawn to this by Mr N. N. Vasu, VJI. Rājanya Kāṇḍa, pp. 302-3.

2. Quarterly Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, 1926, Oct. pp. 55-63; IHQ, 1931, pp. 681 ff.



king claimed victory. The other chiefs defeated by Vijayasena were Vira, Vardhana and Rāghava. It has been suggested that Vira and Vardhana are to be identified with Viraguna and Govardhana of the Rāmacarita.<sup>1</sup> Rāghava is to be identified with the Kaliṅga king of that name, son of Coḍagaṅga. Coḍagaṅga's rule lasted from c. 1076 to 1147 A. D., and his son Rāghava's from c. 1156-60 A. D. In the Kendulapata<sup>2</sup> plates of Narasiṃha it is said that Coḍagaṅga levied tributes from the lands bordering on the Ganges and forced the ruler of the Mandāra to flee. It may be that Vijayasena warded off the Kaliṅga invasion under Rāghava's leadership. In the Deopara 'praśasti' it is further said that the Sena king attacked the lord of Gauḍa and drove away the Kāmārūpa king. The king of Gauḍa has been generally identified with Madanapāla. Some scholars are inclined to think that the Kāmārūpa king refers to Rāyārideva, and this has perhaps been alluded to in the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva. The 22nd verse records that Vijayasena sent a navy against the combination of the western powers (pāścātya-cakra) against him. This might have been meant against the Pālas who seem to have sought refuge in Magadha after the occupation of Varendra by the Sena king and rallied once more their strength to fight. Most probably when all the chiefs were fighting among themselves, the Kalacuri king Prthivīdeva II of Ratanpur made a raid on Lādaha (Rādha?) and Gauḍa, as it is stated in the Akatara stone inscription that his feudatory Vallabhārāja overran these two countries. Both of them were living in 1141 A. D.<sup>3</sup> The eastward advance of the Gāhaḍavāla power during the period 1124-1146 A. D., which is proved by the Maner and Lar plates, probably took place, when all the rival chiefs were fighting among themselves.

It seems that there was a general scramble for power during the rule of the weak successors of Rāmapāla among some of the

1. IA, 1920, pp. 175 ff.

2. JASB, 1896, pt. I. p. 239.

3. Dr. Hiralal, Inscriptions of C. P. and Berrar, p. 109.



feudatories of the Pāla kingdom and the neighbouring kings. The political condition of Bengal was extremely favourable for the foundation of a new power, and in the struggle that followed Vijayasena came out successful. His matrimonial alliance with the Śūra family might have raised his political and social status in the estimation of the contemporary people. The Barrackpore plate was issued from Vikrampura in his 62nd year, in which the chief queen Vilāsadevī performed the 'tulā-puruṣa' ceremony. It is therefore clear that he must have ousted the Varmanas from Vikrampura by that time. The Deopara inscription shows that southern Varendra was under him.<sup>1</sup>

Vijayasena was the real founder of the Sena power in Bengal. It seems that since his early life he was a successful soldier and general, and that was a great asset in his adventurous career. Hero of many battle-fields, he succeeded in foiling the attempts of all other aspirants and took the utmost advantage of the declining and tottering Pāla power. He was lavish in his gifts to the Brahmanas and performed many sacrifices. He excavated many tanks and built a magnificent temple of Pradyumneśvara which was the wonder and admiration of his time.

Vijayasena was succeeded by his son Vallālasena in 1159. A.D.. In his Naihati plate no military achievement excepting some vague statements has been ascribed to him. In the Madhainagar grant of his son it is said that Lakṣmanasena, when a crown prince, seized suddenly the fortune of the Gauḍa king, made war on Kalinga and Kāśī. It seems that these campaigns took place during the reign of Vallālasena. It is important to notice that Vijayasena and Vallālasena did not assume the title of Gauḍeśvara in their own records, though it has been attributed to them in the grants of their successors. If Gauḍeśvara Govindapāla and Palapāla, whose rule

1. The view that Vijayasena became the king of the whole of Varendra rests on a passage of Dānasāgara but the reading is not free from doubts. Some scholars read it as "Tadā Vijayasena prādurāsīdvarendra". while others read "narendra" in place of "varendra". See Dhākāra Itihāsa, p. 813.



in all probability was confined to some part of Magadha, are to be regarded as kings of the Pāla dynasty, they did not give up their claim to the throne of Gauda and might have held some portion of northern Bengal under them. Most probably the war of Vijayasena was not decisive and Vallālasena had to fight with the successor of Madanapāla. The *Vallālacarita*<sup>1</sup> also records that the war with the Pālas was going on at the time of Vallālasena. Owing to the financial stringency caused by this long-drawn war Vallālasena wanted to borrow money from the great banker Vallabhānanda of the Suvarṇavaṇik community. It is further said that the banker was the father-in-law of the Magadha king and was siding with the Pālas. In our opinion, this is to be credited with some historicity.

Of all the kings of ancient period Vallālasena is the best known in every rank and grade of the Hindu society of Bengal as the founder of the institution of Kulinism. We have discussed the whole topic elsewhere in details and have come to the conclusion that the volumes of evidence are now overwhelming in favour of the view that some re-organisation of the Hindu society was made in the Sena period and the start in that direction was given by Vallālasena in Rāḍha among the Brahmanās, although he cannot be called the founder of modern Kulinism with all its paraphernalia in the strict sense of the term. If he is the idol of those who were favoured with Kaulinya rank, it appears that at a later period those who were adversely affected by it tried to blacken the character of the monarch in order to lower him in the estimation of the contemporary people and posterity. The *Vallālacarita* by the Suvarṇavaṇiks and another book of the same name by the Yogis<sup>2</sup> were composed with that avowed object, and the true purport of other flimsy stories associated with the name of Vallālasena seems to be that. His connection with a low caste girl, a consequent domestic quarrel with Lakṣmaṇasena and the division of the Vaidya society

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1. Eng. Trans. by Mm. H. P. Shastri, pp. 15, 90.
  2. *Vallālacarita* published by Haris Candra Kaviratna.



into Vallāli (the followers of Vallālasena) and Lakṣmaṇī (the followers of Lakṣmaṇasana) and stories like these seem to be proagandist in nature,<sup>1</sup> and it is difficult to say how much truth there is underlying them.

Lakṣmaṇasena ascended the throne in 1178 A. D. His military exploits, when a crown prince, as described in the Madhainagara grant, have been discussed. It is said in the same record that he crippled Kaliṅga and Kāmarūpa. It is known from the Madanapara grant of his son Viśvarūpasena that he erected pillars of victory in Puri, Benares and Prāyāga. It appears therefore that Lakṣmaṇasena made another expedition against Kaliṅga and Gāhaḍavāla power. His contemporaries on the Kaliṅga throne were Rājārāja II and Anaṅgabhīma II, both sons of Coḍagaṅga. The name of the contemporary Kāmarūpa king is not known. The Gāhaḍavāla king was Jayacandra whose inscriptions<sup>2</sup> have been found at Benares and Kanouj ranging from 1170 to 1188 A. D., and who was defeated and killed by Sahabuddin in 1194 A. D. Pavanadūtān narrates his march of universal conquest as far south as the Malaya hills, "roughly the southern part of the Western Ghats." It has been pertinently pointed out that it may refer to his invasion of Kaliṅga.<sup>3</sup> From the evidence of the Madanapara grant and Dhovī's book it may be inferred that Lakṣmaṇasena undertook a war of digvijaya, though it must be admitted that the poet's love of exaggeration "served the double purpose of eulogising his patron and finding a most suitable abode for the heroine of his poem." It seems that the Sena power reached its high water-mark during his reign and the kingdom was expanding in the west, which probably necessitated the formation of a new bhukti, namely, Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti, comprising the Santal-paraganas.<sup>4</sup>

Lakṣmaṇasena was the last great Hindu king of Bengal. His name and fame spread far and wide. The Muslim historian Minhaj-

1. B. Sengupta, *Vaidya Jātira, Itihāsa*, pt. 1, pp. 166-180.

2. DH. I, p. 541

3. C. Chakravarti, *Pavanadūtān*, Introduction.

4. EI, XX1, pp. 211ff.



uddin' says that he was a 'great Rai' and 'most respected in Hindusthan.' He further records that trustworthy persons have related to this effect, "from his hand never did any tyranny proceed ; and whosoever preferred a request to him for anything, other than one lak he did not bestow, after the manner of Kutub-ud-din.....the least gift he used to bestow was a lak of Kauris. The Almighty mitigate his punishment ( in hell ) !" But the king, to whose power, charity and just government Minhaj pays such glowing tributes, suffered a severe reverse during the closing years of his reign. There are differences of opinion<sup>2</sup> as to the actual date of the raid of Nadia by Mahammad ibn Bakht-yar, and we shall not be very wrong if we place it in c. 1200 A. D.. As regards the story of the raid, the very nature of Minhaj's sources of information makes us very cautious, and every statement in that connection requires critical scrutiny. It is also clear that when Minhaj wrote his account of the expedition in 641 A. D., there were many rumours and gossips about Lakṣmaṇasena which the historian heard from his informants in Lakṣmaṇāvati. His reporters seem to have been two brothers, Nizam-ud-din and Samsum-ud-din by name, who served under Bakht-yar. It is natural that they should exaggerate the part played by them and their master. How far reliable are their reports can be better judged by narrating some of their stories. It is said that Lakṣmaṇasena was born after the death of Vallālasena. As the time of his birth approached, the sooth-sayers said that the was an ominous time and if the child would see the light of the sun two hours later, he would be a famous king. So the queen's feet were tied up and the child was born

1. *Ṭabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng. Trans. by Raverty. The following account is based on Minhaj's account, pp. 552-559

2. Blochman placed it in 1197-8 A. D. ; E. Thomas in 1202-3 A. D. ; and Stewart in 1203-4 A. D. The definite information is that Bakht-yar entered Kutub-ud-din's service in 590 A. H., and after his sack of Nadia and establishment of headquarters at Lakṣmaṇāvati started for his Tibetan expedition in 601 A. H., and also saw Kutub-ud-din at Mahoba in 599 A. H. with presents from Bengal spoils.



after two hours. That Lakṣmaṇasena was born after the death of Vallālasena is opposed to the plain testimony of the Madhainagar plate. Again, the sooth-sayers told Lakṣmaṇasena that the invasion of the Yavanas would soon happen and it would be better to abandon Nadia. Most of the officers and men fled and sent their property and families to other places. It is quite likely that the fall of one kingdom of northern India after another might have caused some panic among the general people. But the whole thing has been ascribed to the sooth-sayers. If there be any truth in this report, it must be said that Lakṣmaṇasena himself did not abandon Nadia but was determined to stay there. The statement that at the time of the raid he had been on the throne for a period of eighty years is opposed to all other contemporary evidence like *Adbhūtasāgara*, *Dānasāgara* and *Saduktikaṇṭhāmṛta*. This perhaps indicates his actual age rather than his reign-period. It is also likely that the reporters confused the beginning of his reign with the starting-point of the Lakṣmaṇasena Era in 1119-20 A. D., and this is in complete agreement with the view that the raid took place in 1199-1200 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Minhaj gives the following account of the raid : "Bakt-yar caused a force to be prepared, pressed on from Behar, and suddenly appeared before the city of Nudiah." The march was so swift and rapid that only seventeen of his horsemen could keep pace with him, who entered the gate unsuspectingly and were taken to be dealers in horse by the gate-keepers. Entering the inner palace, he surprised the inmates and began slaughter. The king was at his dining table and took a boat by the back door of his palace. "When the whole army arrived and the city round about had been taken possession of, he there took up his quarters ; and Rai got away towards Sankwat and Bang and there the period of his reign shortly afterwards came to a termination.....After Bakt-yar possessed himself of that territory he left the city of Nudiah in desolation and the place which is now Lakhnawati he made the seat of government."

1. *IHQ*, V, pp. 133-5

2. See Appendix C.



A controversy has been raised whether Nadia was the capital of the Senas. Whether the capital or not, it is clear from Minhaj that it was a 'seat of government' of Lakṣmaṇasena, and there is nothing improbable in the fact that like Vikramapura and Lakṣmaṇāvati, Nadia was another headquarter of the Senas. The evidence to identify Vijayapura, a city founded by Vijayasena, with Nudiah of Minhaj is stronger than that to identify it with the place of that name, near the findspot of the Deopara praśasti in the Rajshahi district, because 'Pavanadūtam' places it in Suhma-deśa on the other side of the Ganges.<sup>1</sup>

The above account of the sack and raid of Nadia seems to be true in broad outline, though there might be some exaggeration in matters of details, and it does not reflect much credit on the administration of Lakṣmaṇasena, as the Muslim army could come from Bihar to Bengal unnoticed and unopposed. It appears that it was a surprise attack and every one was unprepared for it and bewildered and puzzled by its suddenness. Judged by its results, the raid of the daring Muslim general was eminently successful. The Sena power collapsed in western and northern Bengal and Minhaj does not mention of any effective opposition in his march to Lakṣmaṇāvati and Devikot.

According to the *Āin-i-Ākbarī*,<sup>2</sup> Lakhan Sen was succeeded by his son Madhu Sen who ruled for 10 years. Saduktikarṇāmṛta refers to a verse of Mādhavasena. Madhu Sen's rule is known only from Abul Fazal whose account of the Hindu kings cannot be always relied upon, if it is not corroborated from other evidence.<sup>3</sup> Two sons of Lakṣmaṇasena, Viṣvarūpasena and Keśavasena, who ruled after him, are known from their own records<sup>4</sup> and the known periods of their reigns are 17 years.

1. C. Chakravartti. *Pavanadūtam*, Intro. p. 8

2. Vol. II. p. 146

3. According to Mr. N. N. Vasu one copper-plate of Mādhava Sena has been found in the Almora district and the reference given is 'Kumaon' by Atkinson, p. 519. But as I cannot verify this, nothing can be said definitely on this point.

4. IB, No. XIII, XIV, XV.



It is therefore almost certain that for the first quarter of the 13th century these two Sena kings could hold themselves against Muslim aggression. Both of them assumed the proud title of Gauḍeśvara and the epithet "Garga-Yavanānvaya-pralaya-kālarudra" has been applied to them. This does not seem to be an empty boast and both the brothers boast that they were dread to the Yavanas and it seems that they successfully repulsed some Muslim invasions.

The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* did not directly record any invasion of east Bengal by the Muslim governors and rulers of Laknauti, but that there were several such attempts is clear from some incidental references by Minhaj. It is therefore quite possible that there had been some other attempts to conquer Bang, which were not recorded at all. Giyasuddin was the independent ruler of Lakṣmṇāvati (1211-1226 A. D.). The rulers of Jainagar, Tirhut, Kāmarūpa and Bang<sup>1</sup> paid tribute to him. Just before the end of his reign, he is said to have invaded Kāmarūpa and Vaṅga. Natural conclusion seems to be that there was previously an invasion against these two countries, and because they refused to pay tribute to the Muslim ruler, another expedition was undertaken against them. It is clear from the account of Minhaj that before Giyasuddin could achieve anything substantial, he had to return on account of the usurpation of Lakṣmṇāvati by Nasiruddin. Next reference to the invasion of east Bengal is made in connection with the rule of Malik Safuddin who sent some elephants to the court of Delhi which were captured in Bang<sup>2</sup> (1231-33 A. D.). It is not known who was the ruling Sena king at this time. Abul Fazal mentions a king of the name of Sūrasena or Sadāsena. Two princes of the Sena dynasty, Sūryasena and Puruṣottamasena, are known from the *Sahitya Parisat* plate of Viśvarūpasena, and it is quite probable that Sūrasena of Abul Fazal is Sūryasena of this plate. Another invasion of east Bengal

1. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 587-588

2. *Ibid.*, p. 782



took place in the reign of Ijjuddin Balban<sup>1</sup> in or about 1258 A. D. Minhaj finished his account in 1259 A. D. and makes the statement that at that time the descendants of Lakṣmaṇasena were ruling in eastern Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

Another Hindu king is known from the Adavadi plate<sup>3</sup> of Daśarathadeva and Danujamādhava was his virūda. He may be identified with Rājā Danujah of Zia-ud-din Barni,<sup>4</sup> who describes him as king of Sonargaon. According to the genealogical book of Harimiśra, he flourished after the Sena rule.<sup>5</sup> When Delhi Sultan Giyasuddin Balban came to suppress the rebellion of the Bengal governor Tughril Khan, an agreement was reached between the Delhi Sultan and this Hindu king of Sonargaon to the effect that the latter would prevent the escape of Tughril Khan by water. The Muslim occupation of eastern Bengal must have been completed by the close of the 13th century.<sup>6</sup>

It cannot be properly ascertained whether the extreme eastern districts like Noakhali and Chittagong were included in the Pāla and Sena kingdoms. No evidence has yet been discovered to prove the extension of the Sena power in the Chittagong division. The Mainamati plate<sup>7</sup> speaks of the existence of an independent kingdom in Paṭṭikerā which is a pargana in modern Tippera. The name of the king is Harikāladeva whose virūda is Raṇavaṇ-kamalla and he came to the throne in 1203-4 A. D. If he was the first king of this family and this principality was included in the Sena kingdom, it seems that with the fall of the Senas in Gauḍa an independent kingdom arose in eastern Bengal. Even within the lifetime of Lakṣmaṇasena a Pāla family from Ayodhyā settled in Khāḍi (in the Sunderbans), and it seems from the Sunderban

1. Ibid., pp. 769-70

2. Ibid., pp. 558. 715

3. IB., p. 181

4. Elliot, History of India vol. III. p. 116

5. Bhāratvarṣa, 1332, B. S. pp. 78-81

6. BI. vol. II. pp. 93 14

7. IHQ. IX. p. 282



plate<sup>1</sup> of Dommonapāla that this king set at naught the Sena authority in that locality and assumed an attitude of independence by 1196 A. D. Another Hindu kingdom was founded about this time. It is known from the Chittagong plate of Dāmodara<sup>2</sup> who was ruling in 1243 A. D.. His earliest known ancestor is Puruṣo-ttoma whose son was Madhusūdana. The title *nṛpa* occurs before his name and it may be that the rise of the family to political power began from him. His son was Vasudeva whose son Dāmodara assumed the proud title "sakala-bhūpati-cakravartī." Nothing more is known of these kingdoms.

The conquest of north-western Bengal by the Muslims and the maintenance of independence by eastern Bengal in spite of the repeated attempts of the Muslims to conquer it suggest one important conclusion. A sudden cavalry raid was sufficient to break the power of the Sena kings in north-western Bengal and the whole of it passed into Muslim hands within a short time. But the physical features of eastern Bengal prevented such an eventuality. It is the country of big rivers and hence cavalry was practically useless. Here for a permanent conquest the naval power was the most important factor. A raid might have been carried on in a certain part but it could not produce a lasting effect. The seeking of the help of Danujamādhava by Sultan Gīyasuddin Balban to prevent the escape of the rebellious governor Tughril Khan by boat clearly illustrates the weakness of the power in eastern Bengal—a power strong in every other respect excepting the navy. This also accounts for the reason why the descendants of Lakṣmaṇasena fought the Muslims from east Bengal and why this part of the country could resist Muslim attacks for about a century, while the great kingdoms of northern India succumbed to Muslim attacks quickly. Before the final conquest of eastern Bengal, the Muslims must have realised the difficulty and perhaps built a navy equal to the occasion.

1. IHQ., X, p. 321 ; IC, I, p 679,

2. IB., No. XVII.



## Appendix B

Our study of the Sena history is based on the following chronology :—

	Probable	Known reign-period
Sāmantasena.....		.....
Hemantasena.....		.....
Vijayasena	c. 1097-1159 A. D.	62 years.
Vallālasena	1159-1178 A. D.	19 years.
Lakṣmaṇasena	c. 1178-1205 A. D.	27 years.
Keśavasena	.....	3 years.
Viśvarūpasena	.....	14 years.

This chronology satisfies (1) the statement in *Dānasāgara* that it was finished by Vallālasena in 1091 S. E., (2) the date 1082 S. E. referred to in some Mss. of *Adbhūtasāgara* as the initial date of Vallālasena's reign, and (3) the date 1127 S. E. as the 27th year (*Ras-aikaviṃśābde*)<sup>1</sup> of Lakṣmaṇasena's reign mentioned in *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*. This also satisfies the contemporaneity of Vijayasena and Nānyadeva of Mithilā ( c. 1097-1150 A. D. ) and Rāghava of Kaliṅga ( c. 1156 A. D. ) and also the astronomical data.<sup>2</sup> This is also in accord with the evidence of the *Tabaqati-i-Nasiri* that Lakṣmaṇasena was defeated by Bakht-yar between 1193 and 1205 A. D.

## Appendix C

## The Lakṣmaṇasena Era.

The origin of the Lakṣmaṇasena Era abbreviated as La Sam is a matter of controversy among scholars. That it was counted at first from 1119-20 ( October to October ) is perhaps to be accepted after what Mr. K. P. Jayaswal has written on the subject.<sup>3</sup> Kielhorn verified six dates of La Sam and came to the

1. IHQ. III, p. 188.

2. EI., Vol. XXI, pp. 211 ff.

3. JBORS., XX, p. 20.



conclusion that they work out satisfactorily, if the initial year was the Kārtikādi Sudi I of the expired Śaka year 1041, with the Āmanta scheme of lunar fortnight = the 7th October, A. D. 1119, and it is supported by a statement of Abul Fazl in the Ākbarnāmā.<sup>1</sup> But the initial year of La Sam, as it is still used in the almanacs of Mithilā, falls on the 30th January, A. D. 1108.. Mr. P. N. Misra verified 12 dates and came to the conclusion that 4 dates work out satisfactorily with Kielhorn's or Mithilā almanac epochs, while the remaining dates work out satisfactorily with the latter.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Jayaswal says that up to a certain period the dating was on the basis of the era commencing in 1119-20 A. D., but after the Muslim conquest of Tirhut the Fasli Era, a lunar reckoning, was promulgated at the time of Akbar. La Sam received from that time a lunar (instead of the earlier luni-solar) calculation and hence the difference in the initial year of the earlier dates and of the later dates. Mr. Jayaswal quotes a passage from a MS. in the possession of Pandit Ganga Nath Misra, according to which a fixed figure is deducted from the current year to obtain La Sam, as well as fixed figures are deducted to obtain Śaka and Vikrama years.

If the initial date of La Sam is thus settled, its origin is far from being so. Discussing the subject, Dr. H. C. Roy Chowdhury writes that its origin is to be sought in the Sena dynasty of Piṭhī and not in the Sena dynasty of Bengal, because it was never used by the Senas of Bengal and its earliest use was confined to Bihar where there is epigraphic evidence of the existence of a line of Sena kings who actually used the era.<sup>3</sup> There are two epigraphs of Aśokavalla known as Bodh-Gaya inscriptions<sup>4</sup> and another of Jayasena found at Janibigha,<sup>5</sup> a place close to Bodh-Gaya, and the dates of these three epigraphs are expressed as follows:—

I. Śrīmal-Lakhvāna (Kṣmaṇa) Senasya-atīta-rājye, S. 51.

1. IA., 1890, p. 1.

2. JASB., 1926, p. 373.

3. Sir Asutosh Jubilee Volume, Orientalia, pt. 2, p. 1.

4. Cunningham, Mahābodhi, p. 78. pl. XXVII A; and JASB., V, p. 951, pl. XXX.

5. JBORS., IV, p. 273.



- II. Śrīmal-Lakṣmaṇasenadevapādānām-atīta-rājye, S. 74.  
 III. Lakṣmaṇasenasya-atīta-rājya, S. 83.

The uniform manner of the expression of these three dates in the records of two kings of Piṭhī shows that they refer clearly to the post-regnal year of a king or an era. Calculating these dates according to La Sam, Dr. Roy Chowdhury says that the king whose reign was a thing of the past in the year 51 (1170 A. D.) cannot be identified with Lakṣmaṇasena of Bengal who ruled in the last quarter of the twelfth century. Therefore he concludes, 'If the founder of Lakṣmaṇasena Era was not identical with Lakṣmaṇasena of Bengal, he must have been the founder of the Sena dynasty of Piṭhī.' But Dr. Roy Chowdhury does not mention any king of Piṭhī of the name of Lakṣmaṇsena.

So far as we know, Tārānātha speaks of two Lavasenas.<sup>1</sup> Granting that Tārānātha's chronology and genealogy of the kings of Magadha and Bengal are faulty, it is to be noticed that Lavasena, the predecessor of Budhasena, Hāritasena, and Pratītasena, is contemporaneous with the Muslim invasion of Bihar and Bengal, and Tārānātha places him after the Senas of Bengal. If it is to be accepted that this Lavasena was king of Piṭhī and was the founder of La Sam in 1119 A. D., the recording of the epigraphs of the time of Jayasena (one of the Sena kings of Piṭhī) in the year 83 of this era and also of Aśokavalla in the years 51 and 73 shows that Piṭhī was in the possession of these kings from 1119 A. D. to the close of the twelfth century. As regards the correct location of Piṭhī, Mr. H. Panday who edited the Janibigha inscription writes that 'our record proves that the sites of the village Janibigha and also Bodh-Gaya were included in the country called Piṭhī. As such it appears to have been the name given to the southern portion of Magadha at least about this time, probably on account of its association with Vajrāsana.'<sup>2</sup>

The history of Piṭhī in the 11th and 12th centuries is known from contemporary records. It is known from the Saranath inscrip-

1. IA., 1875, p. 366.

2. JBQRS., 1918, p. 273.



tion of Kumāradevī<sup>1</sup> that Piṭhī was ruled by Vallabharāja and his son Devarakṣita of the Chikkore family about the middle of the 11th century. Devarakṣita was defeated by Mathanadeva, maternal uncle of Rāmapāla. The chief of Piṭhī who helped Rāmapāla in his Kaivarta war was Bhīmayaśa. The Gaya stone inscription of Govindapāla<sup>2</sup> is dated in the 12th V. E. = 1175 A.D., that year being the "gatarājya caturddaśa samvatsara" of Govindapāla. The affix Pāla, the Buddhist title Paramasaugata and the title Gauḍeśvara raise a strong presumption that he belonged to the Pāla dynasty. Whether Govindapāla was a king of the Pāla dynasty or not, the Gaya stone inscription clearly proves that he ruled in Gaya and in its vicinities about the middle of the twelfth century. R. D. Banerjee assumes<sup>3</sup> with a tolerable degree of certainty that Govindapāla ruled a portion, probably the eastern one, of Magadha. The Jayanagar Image inscription of Palapāla<sup>4</sup> also goes to show that some portion of Magadha was under the rule of this king. The known period of his reign is 35 years and he should be placed before Govindapāla or more probably after him. The evidence of the Rāmacarita, Gaya stone inscription and the Jayanagar inscription tends to show that Magadha was in the 11th and 12th centuries under the possession of the Pālas or under the kings whose names end in Pālas. The Senas of Piṭhī could not possibly rule contemporaneously in the same locality with the Pālas. In all reasonableness, therefore, the Senas of Piṭhī should be placed towards the very close of the 12th century or after that. This is in complete agreement with what we know from Tārānātha, according to whom Lavasena, the predecessor of Budhasena, Hāritasena, and Pratītasena, is contemporaneous with the Muslim invasion of Bihar and the Tibetan historian placed him after the Senas of Bengal. Or, even if it be granted that the Senas of Piṭhī ruled in the 12th century from 1119 A. D., it must be admitted that

1. EL, IX, pp. 324-27.

2. The Pālas of Bengal, pl. XXVIII.

3. *ibid.*, p. 109.

4. JBORS., XIV. pp. 489 ff.



they were local rulers, as the Gaya inscription of 1175 A. D. shows the control of Govindapāla over Piṭhi.

Four inscriptions of Aśokavalla have come to light, and R. D. Banerjee has shown that Aśokavallas of the four epigraphs are identical.<sup>1</sup> The inscription in the walls of the Sūrya temple near Viṣṇupāda at Gaya is dated in the year 1813 of the Nirvāṇa Era. Fleet has shown that this date agrees well with Wednesday, first October, A.D. 1270.<sup>2</sup> It has been pointed out by Dr. R. C. Majumdar that there are reasons to believe that Aśokavalla flourished about 1270 A. D., and naturally the dates in the Bodh-Gaya inscriptions ( and also in Janibigha inscription ) would be taken as counted from the cessation of the reign of Lakṣmaṇasena, that event itself being placed towards the end of the twelfth century, and 'atita rājya' 51 may easily be taken to mean that 50 or 51 years had elapsed since 'atitarājya' or the cessation of the reign.<sup>3</sup> It is quite natural that the Hindus or Buddhists were unwilling to refer to the 'pravardhamāna-vijaya-rājya' of the Muslims who were alien in culture and newcomers and who of late destroyed their temples or monasteries. Therefore the records of this time were dated by referring to the expired years of an Indian king.

Now the question is who is Lakṣmaṇasena from the cessation of whose reign or fall these records were dated ? Is he the famous Lakṣmaṇasena of Bengal or Lavasena of Tārānātha, predecessor of Budhasena ?

The existence of Lavasna rests on the sole authority of Tārānātha. It is not known where he actually ruled and what was his relation with Budhasena. An era is generally associated with the name of a great king. Traditions from different sources associate this era with the Sena dynasty of Bengal. According to Tārānātha,<sup>4</sup> it was counted from the time of Hemantasena, and Abul Fazl<sup>5</sup> associates it with Lakṣmaṇasena. That he was a great king and

1. JASB., 1913, pp. 271 ff.

2. JRAS., 1909, pp. 323 ff.

4. JASB., 1935, p. 48.

3. JASB, 1221, p. 13.

5. IA., 1890, p. 1.



that his fame spread far and wide are evident from his own records and from the testimony of Minhaj who says that Rai Laksmania was a great Rai. An MS. of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa written by Pakṣadhara Miśra is dated in the past year 345 of the king Lakṣmaṇsena of Gauḍa<sup>1</sup>. So far as we know, the Senas of Pīṭhī were never called kings of Gauḍa and perhaps they cannot be called so.

If this era is to be associated with a Sena king of Bengal, it is better to do so with the king whose name and whose stamp of personality it perhaps bears. It cannot be maintained that Lakṣmaṇsena of Bengal started a new era in 1119 A.D.,<sup>2</sup> commemorating his accession, because the evidence of Dānasāgara, Adbhūta-sāgara, Saduktikaṇṇamṛta, and Tabaqati-Nasiri is conclusive on this point. No record dated distinctly in La Sam (as opposed to atitārājye, vinaṣṭa-rājye, etc.) can be placed in the twelfth century. The earliest known document dated in this era is the colophon of an MS. belonging to the Darbar Library of Nepal and the date is La Sam 91 Caitra Vādi Gurau A.D., i.e. 1310. Is it then improbable that this era became current after the death of Lakṣmaṇsena? We have got at least one instance of an era of this period which was associated with the name of a king after his death. The Vallāli San or Parganāti San was current in Bengal even less than two hundred years ago. After a careful examination of all available data Dr. N. K. Bhattasali<sup>3</sup> has come to the conclusion that it began on the 28th September, A.D. 1202. It is significant that in two records this era is clearly called Vallāli San. In any case, Vallālasena's rule cannot be pushed so late as 1202 A.D., Vallālasena has

1. JASB., 1926, p. 373. Referred to by Mr. P. N. Misra.

2. R. D. Banerjee (JASB, 1913, pp. 271 ff.) contended that the Dacca Candi Image inscription was dated in La Sam. Mr. N. G. Majumdar who also maintained that Lakṣmaṇsena started this era (IA., 1919, p. 171) admitted that "it is by no means the only conclusion deducible from the expression Śrimal-Lakṣmaṇasenadevasya Samvat 3. It can also mean simply in the 3rd regnal year of the king without necessarily having any reference to the era started by him."

3. IA., 1923, pp. 314 ff.



a unique place in the social history of Bengal and the popular imagination has perhaps associated this era with his name which in all probability marks the fall or termination of Lakṣmaṇasena's rule. Lakṣmaṇasena was undoubtedly one of the last great Hindu kings of northern India and the Senas of Bengal had important political relations with Bihar. It is not unfair to infer that the people of Bihar dated their records by associating them with a great Hindu king with whom they had some connection. The erection of pillars of victory at Kāśī and Allahabad suggests that Lakṣmaṇasena had some hold over Bihar too. They did not find it difficult to make the year 1119 A.D. the initial year of this era. This may be the date when the Senas under Vijayasena for the first time came into conflict with Nānyadeva of Mithilā or more probably the date of the birth of Lakṣmaṇasena. Minhaj says that Lakṣmaṇasena was in his eightieth year at the time of Baktyar's invasion of Bengal. Lakṣmaṇasena did not possibly rule for 80 years but might have been 80 years old at that time.

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## Appendix D

### Some Doubtful Invasions of Bengal

It is a well-known fact that the composers of royal praśastis described the conquests and achievements of their royal patrons in glowing and very exaggerated terms. Some inscriptions record invasions of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Kālīṅga by some petty kings who, it seems, could not have undertaken any expedition to these distant countries on their own accounts, nor does it seem that they accompanied any powerful king in his victorious expedition. Therefore it is natural that doubts should be expressed about these exaggerated descriptions of the court-poets. Our doubts are further con-



firmed by the fact that the statement of the conquest of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga was sometimes used as a poetic ornamentation. Thus it is claimed in the inscriptions of the Vijayanagara king Kṛṣṇarāya that the rulers of Aṅga, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga waited upon Vijayanagara kings.<sup>1</sup> It needs hardly be said that it was practically impossible for a Vijayanagara king to hold any sway over Aṅga, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Again, it is stated in the Chitrogadh<sup>2</sup> Stone inscription dated in V.S. 1485 that the king Mokala of Mewar subdued the Aṅgas, Kāmārūpas and Vaṅgas. These should be regarded as vague and general statements.

The Pithapuram Pillar inscription<sup>3</sup> of Pṛthivīśvara dated in S. E. 1082 records that Malla I of Dhandapura, son of Kīrtivarman II, subdued the Gaṅgas Kaliṅgas, Vaṅgas and Magadhas. The rulers of this family were chiefs of Velanāḍu. The fifth descendant of Malla I, Kulyavarman II, was a contemporary of the Eastern Cālukya king Vikramādiya (1015-22 A. D.), and Malla may be roughly assigned to the first half of the 10th century A.D.. He might have accompanied a Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch. Otherwise the subjection of these countries by this chief seems to be a hollow statement.

The Eastern Cālukya king Kulottuṅga (c. 1070-86 A. D.) is said to have invaded about 45 countries<sup>4</sup> among which the names of Vaṅga and Vaṅgālas also appear. The Kalacuri king Vijjana of Kalyāṇa pretended to conquer Pāṇḍya, Cola and Vaṅga.<sup>5</sup> Again, his son Saṅkāmadeva's exploits are said to have extended over Gauḍa, Turuṣkas, Siṃhala, Cola, Magadha and Malaya. One of his known date is 1186 A. D., that year being the fifth year of his reign.<sup>6</sup> It is said that Udayarāja, son of Soccharāja, conquered

1. EI., XII, p. 132; XIV, p. 170

2. Ibid, II, p. 439

3. Ibid IV, p. 32

4. IA., IX, pp. 93ff.

6. Ibid, v, p. 45

5. IA., IV, p. 275



Cola, Gauḍa and Karṇāṭa.<sup>1</sup> He belonged to the Bhinnmal Paramāra branch and is to be placed before 1161<sup>2</sup> A.D.. Kalacurya Bhillama ( one of whose inscriptions is dated in 1189 A. D. ) is said to have been "a severe pain in the head of the Mālavas, a thunderbolt to that mountain Varālas, a lion to the tall elephants of Kaliṅgas, the roar of a cloud to the flocks of those swans of Gurjaras, Colas, Gauḍas and Pāñcalas, Kāla to the brilliant kings of Aṅgas, Vaṅgas and Nepālas."<sup>3</sup> It is not known from any other source that in the last half of the 12th century any king of Kuntala was so powerful as to defeat all these kings. Curiously enough, in the inscription of his son Jaitugi no victory is ascribed to the father, but Jaitugi himself is said to have conquered the Gurjaras, Pāṇḍyas, Colas, Lāṭas, Gauḍas, and some of his officers are said to have invaded Mālavas, Kaliṅgas, Turuṣkas and Nepālas.<sup>4</sup> All these exaggerated statements of both the father and the son cannot be taken as historical facts. Two more kings of Kuntala, Bijjala and his son Soma ( the former is described as the founder of the Kalacurya kingdom ), are said to have raided the Colas, Nepālas, Kaliṅgas, Pāñcālas and Gurjaras and to have received the homage of the Gauḍas, Pāṇḍyās, Malayalas and Varālas.<sup>5</sup> It is asserted in the Godag inscription<sup>6</sup> of Vira-Vallava II, dated in 1114 S. E., that this Hoy-sala king frightened the Aṅgas, Kaliṅgas, Vaṅgas. Magadhas, Colas, Malayas, Pāṇḍyas, Keralas and Gurjaras. In the Ekamantha inscription,<sup>7</sup> dated in 1172 S. E., Gaṇapatideva claims to have defeated Simhana ( a Yādava king ), kings of Kaliṅga, Lāṭa and Gauḍa. It is stated in the Mamadpur inscription<sup>8</sup> of Kanhara,

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1. Bhandarkar's List No. 312

2. Dr. D. C. Ganguly, History of Paramāra Dynasty. p. 347

3. EI., xv, p. 33

4. Ibid. v. p. 31

5. EI., v, p. 257 ; xv, p. 317

6. Ibid, vi, p. 92

7. IA., xxi, p. 197

8. EI., xix, p. 21



dated in 1177 S. E., that his grandfather Simhana overcame the Gurjaras, Magadha and Gaudas.

In the absence of any corroborative evidence these bold and wide claims should be dismissed as baseless. It is quite possible that some of these chiefs might have accompanied their overlords and gained some victories which in their records are claimed as their own achievements. But it is also true that some of them are purely hollow statements.

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## CHAPTER VII

### Administrative System

#### Central Government

The form of government was monarchical. The king was the apex of the whole system and had the usual imperial titles, 'Parameśvara,' 'Paramabhaṭṭāraka' and 'Mahārājādhirāja'. In the Edilpur grant of Keśavasena Aśvapati, Gajapati, Narapati<sup>1</sup> are also the titles of the king in addition to the usual ones. "Royalty is limited to the descendants of one family", observes merchant Sulaiman, "and never goes to another." This remark appears to be quite correct in view of the almost continuous rule of the Pālas for about four centuries and of the Senas for about one century. Force was the only factor by which a dynasty was ousted, as the Pālas were. Election was not unknown but very uncommon. A king was elected only in extraordinary circumstances. Gopala I, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, was elected king to escape from anarchy (mātsyanyāyam-apahitum). The Rājatarāṅgiṇī refers to the election of Yaśakara by the Brāhmaṇas after 939 A. D.. Kalhaṇa's remark on this election that to take such a course (to elect a king) is tantamount to lunacy is instructive.<sup>2</sup> The inscription of Ratanpāla records the election of Brahmapāla in the neighbouring kingdom of Kāmarūpa.<sup>3</sup> Gopāla's election by the 'prakṛtis'

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1. In the Gāhaḍavāla records the kings are given the appellations of Aśvapati, Narapati, Gajapati, Giripati and Triśaṅkapati. These terms, according to Dr. R. S. Tripathi, signify lords of various classes of feudatories, but the first three may denote three branches of army (IHQ 1938, p. 121). According to Si-yü-ki, however, when there is no paramount monarch, the southern, northern and eastern parts of Jambudvīpa (India) are respectively supposed to be ruled over by four sovereigns called Gajapati, Chatrapati, Aśvapati and Narapati (Beal's Translation Vol. I, p. 13, note)

2. BK. V, 456 ff

3. JASB, 1898, p. 99



has generally been taken as an election by the people.<sup>1</sup> But 'prakṛti' is a technical political term meaning principal officers. The Śukranīti gives a list of ten 'prakṛtis' consisting of the chaplain, the minister, the judge and so on.<sup>2</sup> In the Rājatarāṅginī a group of seven officials who elected Jalauka, son and successor of Aśoka, is called 'prakṛtis'.<sup>3</sup> The election of Yaśakara was made by the Brāhmaṇas. It is improbable that there was a general election in the 8th century. We are, therefore, inclined to take the view that Gopāla was placed on the throne by the officers of state.

It cannot be definitely stated what happened in the case of the succession of a minor to the throne. Either a regent or a council of regency was perhaps set up. It is also quite possible that the great officers carried on the of the government in the name of the minor king.

The Queen-Consort's position was very high. She figures third in the list of the officers and feudatories. Kauṭilya also placed her in the first grade of officers with Mantrin and Purohita, drawing 48,000 paṇas from the state treasury. The actual political influence exercised by the Queen-Consort is not known, but it seems that as the chief queen her influence was considerable. In the Arthaśāstra the Queen Mother also gets 48,000 paṇas. What her position was is not known. Vilāsadevī, the Śūra princess and mother of Vallālasena, performed a religious ceremony and lands were granted to the sacrificial priest as dakṣiṇā.<sup>4</sup>

Yuvarāja—The heir-apparent was perhaps selected during the lifetime of the ruling king. Tribhuvanapāla and Rājyapāla were heir-apparents of Dharmapāla and Devapāla. Most probably these

1. Gaṇḍalekhamālā p. 19 fn. 2; Bāṅglāra Itihāsa, p. 151

2. Śukra. Book II, 196-70

Samāstam purōdhā lakṣaṇam yam taducyate purōdāśca pratinidhiḥ  
pradhānaḥ sacivastathā mantri prādvivākaśca paṇḍita sumantrakaḥ amātya  
dūta ityeta rājya prakṛtayo daśaḥ

3. Rājatarāṅginī, Bk. I, 118, 20.

5. Naihati plate.



two princes predeceased their fathers. It is certain that the crown-princes had important functions in the government. The above-mentioned princes are referred to as the *dūtakas* of the *Khālimpur* and *Monghyr* grants. It is known from the *Rāmacarita* that *Rāmapāla* was closeted in discussions with his son *Rājyapāla*<sup>1</sup> who was entrusted with the task of government in the old age of the king.<sup>2</sup> *Lakṣmaṇasena*, when a crown prince, invaded *Gauḍa* and *Kaliṅga*, and defeated the king of *Kāśī*.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that *Rājaputras* of the land grants were most probably not the princes of the blood royal but the ordinary *Rajput* soldiers, holding fiefs from the kings in return for their military service.<sup>4</sup> *Rājaputra* figures after *Rājñī* and *Rāṇaka* and before *Rājāmātya*, *Mahāpurohita* and *Mahāsenāpati*. It is, therefore, reasonable to take *Rājaputra* to be princes, if not the crown princes. Princes sometimes enjoyed land. *Kumāra Sūryasena* and *Puruṣottamasena* enjoyed land which was granted by them on ceremonial occasions (on birth-day and on the occasion of *Uttarāyaṇasamkramaṇa*) but these grants were confirmed by a royal charter.<sup>5</sup>

The status of another officer may be discussed here. *Kumārāmātya* and *Māhākumārāmātya* figure in the list of officers but their position is not very high. Literally the word means the minister of princes. In the Gupta period *Kumārāmātyas* were the governors of *Koṭivarṣaviṣaya*. The *Basarh* seals refer to various classes of *Kumārāmātyas*. Mr. R. D. Banerjee divides them into four classes according to their ranks<sup>6</sup>: (1) ordinary, (2) equal in rank to princes of the royal blood (*Yuvarājapādiya*), (3) equal in rank to the crown prince (*Śrī-Yuvarājabhaṭṭāraka-pādiya*), (4) equal in rank to his Majesty (*Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pādiya*). The position and

1. BK. 1, 421

2. BK. 4, 1

3. Madhainagar plate.

4. JDL. XVI, p. 30. Our records do not favour the interpretation offered by Dr. Vogel as 'noble man.' See, Chamba, p. 122

5. Sahitya Parisat plate of Viśvarūpasena.

6. The Age of Imperial Guptas, Ch. on Administration.



status of Kumārāmātya and Mahākumārāmātya cannot be determined in the Pāla period, as nothing particular is known of them from the records. The term Mahākumārāmātya suggests that there might have been different classes of Kumārāmātyas.

Rājāmātya—Most probably he was 'Mantrin' (the prime minister) of the Arthaśāstra or Sarvadarśin of the Śukraniti. Among the officials proper he figures first, and it goes to signify that next to the king he was the most important personage in the government. The ancient writers on political science recognised the supreme importance of ministers and enjoin that they should be very carefully selected. Two great ministerial families who served the Pālas are known from their own records. They were learned men as well as men of great ability and capacity. It is claimed in the Badal Pillar inscription that Garga made Dharmapāla, lord of the east, master of all quarters. His son Darbhapāṇi by his wisdom and diplomacy made Devapāla lord of the earth from the Vindhyās to the Himālayas. This talented minister was held in high respect by the king. Darbhapāṇi's son, Someśvara, was dear to the king. By the wise counsel of Kedārmiśra, Someśvara's son, Devapāla uprooted the Utkalas, shattered the pride of the Huṇas and crushed the power of the Drāviḍas and the Gurjjaras. Guravamiśra, builder of the Badal Pillar, was the minister of Nārāyaṇapāla and 'dūtaka' of the Bhāgalpur grant. He was eloquent in speech, proficient in Āgamas, Tantras, astrology and in the Vedas and a fighter in the assembly as well as in the field. The Kamauli plates of Vaidyadeva introduce us to another line of hereditary ministers whose services to the Pālas were of great value. Yogaḍeva was the minister of Vighrapāla III and his son Bodhideva was the counsellor of Rāmapāla. But the most successful and ablest minister of the family was Bodhideva's son Vaidyadeva. He was dear to Kumārāpāla as his own life. He put down a rebellion in southern Bengal by winning a naval victory and by rapid marches surprised Tiṅgyadeva who raised the standard of revolt in Kāmarūpa. This record clearly shows that ministers were sometimes capable generals too. Perhaps as a



reward for his service he was appointed ruler of Kāmarūpa. Or, it may be that Vaidyadeva asserted his independence after the death of Kumārapāla. In any case his titles, Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājādhirāja in his own record indicate his pretension to royal dignity.

In the Kamauli plate it is said that Yogadeva came to office through heredity. The Badal praśasti and the Kamauli plates would go to indicate that during the time of the Pālas hereditary ministers were preferred. While speaking of the hereditary monarchy prevalent in India, the merchant Sulaiman writes, "The same is the case with families of wazirs, kazis and other high officers. They are all hereditary and never changed or altered." It seems that the principle of heredity was followed in the selection of the high officers of state.

The Edilpur grant of Keśavasena and the Madanpara grant of Viśvarūpasena are at first passed by the clerk of the Mahāsāndhivigrahika who was the minister of peace and war. They are then endorsed by the clerk of the Mahāmahattaka and finally approved by the clerk of his Majesty. Mr. N. G. Majumdar translates 'Mahāmattaka' as Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> It seems that grants passed from the office of the Sāndhivigrahika were to be endorsed by the office of the Mahāmahattaka. This goes to show that the Prime Minister had some pre-eminence over the Sāndhivigrahika who was also a minister and high officer.

Mahāpurohita—He is not mentioned in the Pāla grants, and it may be suggested that this office did not exist under the Buddhist Pālas. In the R̥gvedic time the Purohita used to advise the king in all religious matters. In the Maurya and Gupta periods Dharmamahāmātyas and Vinayasthitisthāpakas were ministers of morals. The Kalacuris had Dharmapradhāna in addition to Mahāpurohita.<sup>2</sup> It cannot be exactly determined what was the function of the Mahāpurohita under the Senas. Undoubtedly his position

1. IB. p. 131

2. JASB. XXXI. p. 116; Kumbhi plates of Vijayasinha I.



was very high as his rank in the list of officers is next to Rājāmātya. In the Arthaśāstra the sacrificial priest, the spiritual preceptor and the Purohita were to get 48,000 paṇas. Rājapaṇḍita,<sup>1</sup> Rājaguru<sup>2</sup> and Śāntivārika<sup>3</sup> were granted lands on many occasions in the Sena period. The Mahāpurohita might have superintended royal religious establishments. Whether he had some pre-eminence over other religious officers of the king cannot be ascertained.

Mahādharmādhyakṣa—He was the chief justice. This post was held by very learned men. The famous scholar Halāyudha was Dharmādhyakṣa of Lakṣmaṇasena. Paṇḍita Gonandana was the Dharmādhyakṣa of Vaidyadeva at whose request the Kamauli grant was made.

Mahāsāndhivigrahika—Minister in charge of war and peace, corresponding to the Foreign Secretary of modern times. The dūtaka of the Sena grants was generally this officer. A verse in the Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya states that Sāndhivigrahika should be the drafter of the copper plate charters, and this rule was followed by the Senas, as the grants were first issued from his office. This responsible office was sometimes held by learned and capable men. Famous Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva of the Bhuvanesvara praśasti was the Sāndhivigrahika of Harivarmadeva of Eastern Bengal and his grandfather Ādideva held this post of another un-named king of Vaṅga. Nārāyaṇadatta held this post under Lakṣmaṇasena and was dūtaka of four grants of his reign.

Mahāsenāpati—Commander-in-chief. In the Arthaśāstra he is a first-grade officer. As the head of the army his influence was

1. In the Sahitya Parisat Plate of Viśvarūpasena there is a reference to a Rājapaṇḍita named Maheśvara. Most probably he was a court Paṇḍita. In the Sukranīti Paṇḍita is the minister of morality and religion.

2. Murāri was the Rājaguru of Vaidyadeva and his son Manoratha composed the Kamauli grant.

3. Śāntivārika is known from the Raṇipal and Dhulla plate of Śrīcandra and the Sunderban plate of Lakṣmaṇasena. Mr. N. G. Majumdar suggests that he may be the priest in charge of propitiatory rites. Śāntiyāgarika was perhaps the priest in charge of the room where propitiatory rites are performed.

4. B.K.I. 319.20



very great. According to Kāmandaka<sup>1</sup>, the following should be the qualifications for this office. He is to be healthy, enduring, self-confident, amiable, generous, respected, energetic, heroic, valorous, of noble family, native of the land and of commanding personality. He is to be an expert in the use of four-fold forces. "He should be familiar with the movement of informants and reconnoiterers, skilful and competent to manage the whole force, read the minds of others including those of animals, know the routes to march through, not be dismayed by the lack of food, or drink, or by inclement weather, who can sow dissensions among the enemy's army, who is capable of protecting his camp and is equal to the occasion and who takes to work regardless of consequences but with full hopes of fruition of his labours."

Mahāmudrādhikṛta, Antaraṅga-Vṛhaduparika and Mahākṣapaṭalika. These three officers are mentioned always jointly, and it seems that they are connected with finances and revenue administration. Kauṭilya's Mudrādhyaṁśa is the superintendent of passports and a minor officer. Dr. R. G. Basak takes him to be the keeper of Royal Seal<sup>2</sup>. But the reasonable view seems to be to take Mahāmudrādhikṛta as the officer in charge of Treasury and Currency. His functions might have been like those of the Sannidhātā of the Arthaśāstra<sup>3</sup>.

There is much misconception about the term Antaraṅga-Vṛhaduparika. Dr. R. G. Basak<sup>4</sup> translates it as "Chief-Privy councillor", and Dr. N. K. Bhattasali as "of the intimate class of servants."<sup>5</sup> It has been suggested by some<sup>6</sup> that he should be taken as the royal physician because in Śivadāsa's commentary on

1. Ch. XVIII. 26-42.

2. EI. XII, p. 37.

3. Arthaśāstra Book II.

4. EI. XII, p. 37.

5. Ibid. Vol. XVIII, p. 76ff

6. JDL. XVI. p. 33; IC. Vol. 1. p. 684; Again, some have suggested that antaraṅgavṛhaduparika is the head of spies, see chapter on administration, Dhākāra Itihāsa.



Cakrapānidatta the word *antaraṅga* has been used in a technical sense to signify the royal physician. But this explanation does not seem to be appropriate in view of the fact that this officer figures between *Mahāmudrādhikṛta* and *Mahākṣapaṭalika*, who are undoubtedly two officers of the finance department. In the *Gugrahati* plate of *Samācāradeva*<sup>1</sup> *Antaraṅga-uparika* and *Suvarṇavīthyādhikṛta* *Jivadatta* was the governor of *Varākamaṇḍala*. It is highly improbable that a physician should hold the office of a governor. Dr. Bhattasali translates '*suvarṇavīthyādhikṛta*' as the master of the bullion market but suggests that the real title may have been master of the Mint or Treasury. This unmistakably shows his connection with the revenue administration. Equally unacceptable is the suggestion of Mr. G. P. Sarkar that by the term *antaraṅga-vṛhaduparika* two officers are meant because it is the epithet of *Jivadatta* in the *Gugrahati* plate. But it is most likely, as it has been suggested by the same writer, that *Vṛhaduparika* must be some higher official who perhaps used to superintend the subordinate *uparikas* who are, according to Bühler's explanation on *uparikara*, fiscal officers.<sup>2</sup> Now what does the word '*antaraṅga*' signify? *Antaraṅga* literally means 'intimate,' 'dear,' 'of one's own.' It may be suggested that this officer was also in charge of crown land and property. Thus this officer seems to have double functions, viz., to superintend the work of the subordinate *uparikas* and to look after crown property. His work may be equated to that of *Samāhartā* of the *Arthaśāstra*.

*Mahākṣapaṭalika* was the head of the Record office. Mr. Monahan<sup>3</sup> interprets the word *akṣapaṭala* both as an accountant's office and a general record room and this seems to be correct in view of the fact that in the description of his duties in the

1. E1. XV111, p. 76

2. IA. 1878. p. 66. Additional Vallabhi grants, "Upari, usually spelt upri, is a Maratha revenue term which denotes a temporary holder who cultivates land in a village, where he does not reside".

3. BK. II. Sec. 6. Early History of Bengal—Monahan.



Arthaśāstra he was also an accountant general of the state.<sup>1</sup> The Belava plate of Bhojavarman was finally approved by Mahākṣapaṭalika.

Mahāpratihāra - He was the great chamberlain. In the Mahābhārata he is one of the 18 tirthas and in the Arthaśāstra his name occurs in the second grade of officers along with Samāhartā and Sannidhātā. He is sometimes mentioned in our records along with military officers and it may indicate that he was also regarded as a military officer. The feudatories and high administrative officers were sometimes honoured with this title. In the Gunaighar grant of 508 A.D. of Vainyagupta the dūtaka of the grant had the title Mahāpratihāra in addition to three other titles.<sup>2</sup> The Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince Śivarāja who led the vanguard of Rāmapāla's army in the Kaivarta war had this title.<sup>3</sup> It may be that there were honorary *aid de camps* of the king (like Mahārājā of Kashmir and some other native rulers of India).

Two other high officers seem to have been associated with the central administration - Mahāsarvādhikṛta and Mahākartākṛtika, though their functions are not known. That Mahāsarvādhikṛta was an important officer is evident from the fact that he is mentioned<sup>4</sup> in the Rampal plate of Śricandra between Mahākṣapaṭalika and Mahāpratihāra and in the Ramganj plate of Iśvaraghoṣa between Mahākṣapaṭalika and Mahāsenāpati. According to Dr. Monier-Williams, this word has been used in the Rājatarāṅginī in the sense of general superintendent. He may be the superintendent of public works or superintendent of the state mines and other state industries. Mahākartākṛtika figures in the Mongyr plate of Devapāla after Amātya and in the Bhagalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla after Mahāpratihāra. The meaning of the term cannot be made out, but

1. Bk. II, 7.

2. IHQ. 1930. p. 40.

3. Rāmacarita, Bk. I. 47.

4. Gupta Ins. Vakataka plates, p. 287. EI., XIV, p. 36 2.1.30. This officer is mentioned in these two grants also.



it may be that he was an officer of Mahāsarvādhikṛta's type. Another high officer, Piṭhikāvitta, figures after Mahāpurohita and before Mahādharmādhyakṣa in the Belava plate. The meaning of the term is not known. The author of the Dhākāra Itihāsa says that Piṭhikā means the main part of an image and takes him to be a sculptor.<sup>1</sup> But it can hardly be accepted that a sculptor should occupy such a high position. Piṭha means a religious student's seat, office, a royal seal. As he is mentioned after Mahāpurohita, he may be taken to be a religious officer.

The most important question as to who constituted the council of ministers is not easy to answer. The fact that in the Sunderban plate of Dommaṇapāla the expression 'saptasaciva' has been used perhaps indicates that the ministers were seven in number in the Sena period in normal circumstances. The Sena inscriptions are uniform in describing the list of officers and therefore it may be inferred that seven high officers proper who figure first in the list formed the ministry. In normal circumstances the ministry then seems to have consisted of Rājāmātya, Mahāpurohita, Mahādharmādhyakṣa, Mahāsāndhivigrahika, Mahāsenāpati, Mahāmudrādhikṛta and Antaraṅgavṛhaduparika. The evidence of the Rāmacarita is conclusive of the fact that on important and urgent matters the ministers were consulted. It is said that Rāmapāla was always closeted with the ministers in deciding the course of action to be taken against the revolting Kaivarta chief.<sup>2</sup>

Another important point may be discussed here. All the officers mentioned above have the affix 'mahā' attached to their designation, and therefore the question may be raised whether they had under-secretaries under them like modern Under-Secretary for Foreign affairs and Under-Secretary of State for India, etc. It is certain that these high officers had separate departments and offices of their own, as we have most of the Sena grants passed

1. Dhākāra Itihāsa by J. M. Roy. p. 489.

2. Rāmacarita 1/42.



and endorsed by the clerks of Mahāsāndhivigrahika, of Mahāmahattaka and of the Majesty. The Belava plate was issued from the office of Mahākṣapaṭalika. Nārāyaṇadatta, who was the dūtaka of the four grants of Lakṣmaṇasena, had the designation of Sāndhivigrahika, while those grants were issued from the office of Mahāsāndhivigrahika. It may be then reasonably inferred that Mahāsāndhivigrahika had at least one Sāndhivigrahika under him. The same may hold good of other high officers who have 'mahā' affixed to their official designation.

### Ambassadors and Messengers

The mention of four classes of ambassadors and messengers in the Pāla records indicates that there were perhaps different ranks and gradations. Kauṭilya gives different names to the envoys according to their rank and the work entrusted to them was in accordance with their status. In the Arthaśāstra the first in rank enjoyed the status of a minister and is called Nīśīṣṭārthaḥ. Then next comes Parimitārtha who has the same qualifications less by one quarter and is an agent entrusted with a definite mission. The last one is Sāsanaḥaraḥ who has the same qualification less by one-half and is a conveyer of royal writs. It must be observed that the envoys of the Arthaśāstra have to do much of the spying work in the country where he was sent. The envoys of the different ranks of the Arthaśāstra can very well be compared with the regular order of rank and precedence of envoys established by the congress of Vienna in 1815 :—

(a) Ambassadors—represented the person and dignity of their sovereigns as well as their affairs.

(b) Envoys, Ministers Plenipotentiary and others accredited to sovereigns.

(c) *Charge's d' Affairs*, accredited not to sovereigns, but to Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

It cannot be definitely said whether there was a regular gradation of envoys in the Pāla period but the mention of four classes suggests so.



(1) Dūta---He was perhaps highest in rank and represented the sovereign in foreign courts.

(2) Khola---The term cannot be properly explained. In the dictionaries we have one meaning. (Khola--Gamyarthe vikalpe). As he is mentioned always along with Dūta, it is very likely that his function was also that of an envoy.

(3) Gamāgamika---He was perhaps the messenger from the central court to the provinces or districts and *vice versa*.

(4) Abhittaramāna - As the name denotes, he was the carrier of urgent messages.

Besides these, Dutapraīṣaṇika figures as an officer. He was probably the officer in charge of the messengers, under whose direction they were sent in different parts.

The Pālas and Senas had important political relations with the neighbouring kings. The Nālandā grant of Devapāla proves that there was regular intercourse between the Pāla empire and Indonesia. It is known that Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa, a famous king of the Śailendra dynasty, asked through an ambassador (dūtakamukhena) for a grant of four villages for the maintenance of a Buddhist monastery from the Pāla king and the dūtaka of the royal grant of this land was Bālavarman, governor of Vyāghrataṭṭhaṇḍala, who has been described as the right hand man of Devapāla (dakṣiṇahasta iva). This probably tends to show that when the transaction was between two independent monarchs a distinguished officer, conversant with court formalities and etiquette, was the messenger.

### **Territorial divisions and their administration**

The largest territorial division of the Pāla and Sena kingdoms was Bhukti. In the glorious days of the Pālas, their empire extended as far as Kanouj in the west and it seems that Tirabhukti (Bhagalpur grant) and Śrīnagarabhukti (Mongyr and Nālandā grants) were under the direct administration of the Pālas. Other known Bhuktis of the Pāla and Sena kingdoms are Pauṇḍravardhanabhukti, Vardhamānabhukti and Kaṅkagrānabhukti. The



last one seems to have been formed in the reign of Lakṣmaṇasena probably in view of his conquests in the direction of Bihar. All Bhuktis were not equal in area. Pauṇḍrwardhanabhukti was perhaps the largest and compared with it Vardhamānabhukti and Kaṅkagrāmabhukti were much smaller.

Bhuktis were divided into Maṇḍalas and Viṣayas. The relation between Maṇḍala and Viṣaya is not known. In majority of the grants Maṇḍala is a sub-division of a Viṣaya. But in the Khalimpur inscription Mahāntaparakāśaviṣaya is a subdivision of the Vyāghrataṭimaṇḍala. This discrepancy may be explained by the assumption that the term Maṇḍala was given to well-known divisions of the country. Uttara-Rāḍha is a well-known division of Rāḍhā and in the Naihati plate of Vallālasena it is called a Maṇḍala. Our assumption is further strengthened by the fact that we have a class of feudatories with the title Mahāmāṇḍalika. In the land grant of Mahāmāṇḍalika Iśvaraghoṣa there is no mention of any Bhukti in the description of the land granted and Piyokamaṇḍala is the highest division of which Gallitipyakviṣaya is a subdivision. In the Sena grants Varendra, Uttara-Rāḍha, Vyāgrataṭī, Vaṅga have been mentioned as a part of the Bhukti; Viṣaya is conspicuous by its absence but in the list of officers Viṣayapati is invariably present. It would seem therefore that bigger Maṇḍalas like Vyāgrataṭī, Uttara-Rāḍha denote well-known parts of the kingdom and these bigger Maṇḍalas were perhaps the highest administrative section, next to Bhukti. But ordinarily (as is the case in most of the Pāla grants) Maṇḍalas were subdivisions of the Viṣayas.

Smaller Maṇḍalas were divided into Khaṇḍalas and Vithis whose relation is not known. Vithī was divided into Khaṭikā which was again subdivided into Vṛtta. Caturaka formed the next subdivision which was composed of Grāmas. In the Nālandā grant of Devapāla Grāmas were included into Naya. The lowest subdivision was Pāṭaka. It is not to be supposed that all these territorial divisions were uniform in every locality. The minute divisions like Khaṭikā, Vṛtta, Caturaka are found in some of the Sena grants and Naya as a subdivision is mentioned only in the Nālandā grant of Devapāla.



The Bhuktis were governors of Bhuktis or provinces. In the Pāla records Bhuktipati does not figure in the list of officers but there is a high officer designated Rājasthāniya-uparika. Uparika-Mahārāja was the title of the governor of Pauṇḍravardhanabhukti during the Gupta period.<sup>1</sup> The Rājasthāniya-uparikas were perhaps provincial governors representing the crown. As it has already been suggested that the term Uparika is connected with revenue administration, it is quite probable that one of the main duties of the governor was the collection of revenues. But they must have other administrative duties also. The relation of the Bhuktipati with the governor of bigger Maṇḍalas is not known. Bālavarma, officer in charge of Vyāghrataṭimaṇḍala, and described as the right hand a man of Devapāla and a man of great military renown, was perhaps appointed by the emperor himself. In the sixth century the governors of Varākamaṇḍala in East Bengal meditated on the feet of his Majesty and no mention of Bhukti or Bhuktipati is found in them.<sup>2</sup> It is also to be noted that in the Faridpur plates the officers in charge of Varākamaṇḍala had also sometimes the designation of Uparika which indicates their connection with revenue administration. In the Gugrahati plate (Faridpur grant D) it is specially mentioned that the Viṣayapati Pavitraka was approved of by Jivadatta, governor of Varākamaṇḍala.

Nothing particular is known of the district officers or Viṣayapatis. They figure as minor officers in the Pāla and Sena records. The Damodarpur plates and the Faridpur grants supply sufficient information about the district government and administration that were prevalent in Bengal in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. Viṣayapatis were probably appointed by the Bhuktipati and the sanction of the central government was perhaps required. In the Damodarpur plates Nos. 1, 2, 5, the Viṣayapatis meditate on the feet of the Bhuktis but in the Baigram plate<sup>3</sup> Kulavṛddhi,

1. EI. XV, pp. 130 ff.

2. Faridpur grants, IA. 1910, pp. 193. ff.

3. EI., XXI, p. 78



the district officer, meditates on the feet of his Majesty and the same is the case in the Vappaghoṣavaṭa grant of the time of Jayanāga. In the Damodarpur plates the Viṣayapatis had the title of Kumārāmātya or Tat-niyuktaks. The title Sāmanta in the Vappaghoṣavaṭa grant probably indicates that the Viṣayapatis were sometimes men of military renown or, that feudatories were also appointed as district officers. They might have been responsible for the revenues and good government of the districts under them.

The headquarters of the districts were in towns. In important cities or districts like Koṭivarṣa or Puṇḍravardhana the district officer was helped by a board consisting of Nagaraśreṣṭhī, Svārthavāha, Prathama-kulika and Prathama-kāyastha, i.e. the guild-president, the leading merchant, the leading banker<sup>1</sup> and the leading scribe. There is considerable disagreement among scholars about the functions of this board which constituted the Adhiṣṭhānādhikaraṇa. Dr. Ghoshal has rightly pointed out the Act IX of the Mṛchchakaṭikā, describing the famous trial scene, referring to the king's judges (called Adhikaraṇikas and Adhikaraṇabhojakas) who were assisted by the guild-president and the scribe.<sup>2</sup> It is to be conceded then that in important district headquarters justice was administered with the help of a board in which the important interests of those days were represented. Though this board has been mentioned in the land records, its relation with other branches of administration (excepting judicial) cannot be definitely established from the data at our hand. It is important to notice here that the existence of this board has not been referred to in the Dhanaidaha, Baigram plates and Damodarpur No. 4 and not also in the Faridpur plates. It is, therefore, permissible to hold that such a board existed only in important cities or districts. However, its existence in Koṭivarṣa and Puṇḍravardhana points to organised life among the commercial and industrial classes of those days. How could there be a Prathama-kulika

2. Dr. R. G. Basak translates Kulika as artisan (following Bhānuji Dīkṣita)

2. *Hindu Revenue system*, pp. 202-3, Various other views held by different scholars are discussed there.



and Prathama-kāyastha without an organized following or how could the community be represented without an organization? The answer to these questions affirms this. That their position and influence was felt in the society is proved by their relation with the government. The four representatives came to hold their position either by their leading position or by election.

In the Dhanaidaha plate and the Damodarpur plate No. 3 the application from the intending purchaser is received by Grāmika, Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa<sup>1</sup>, Kuṭumbin<sup>2</sup> and named and unnamed Brahmanas. In other grants of the Gupta period in northern Bengal the district officer and the office of the district headquarters receive the application. In the Damodarpur plates Nos. 3 and 5 the Prakṛtis (subjects) and Kuṭumbins are informed of the transaction. In the Vaigram plate the Kuṭumbins along with the Brahmanas and Samavyavahārins are informed. In the Faridpur grants the application for purchase was received and land was disposed of by the district office and the Prakṛtis headed by eighteen leading men of the district (in Grant A) and in other three grants by the district office headed by the named chief scribe<sup>3</sup> and leading men of the district, as well as Vyāpārins or Vyavahārins.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to say what were the functions of the Mahattaras

1. Some scholars like to explain the term Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa as meaning one in charge of supervision of eight families. In Manu (VII. 118-19) and the Mahābhārata (xii. 6816-8) the lord of one village would enjoy one Kula of land and the lord of ten villages 5 Kulas and so on. In the Gupta period Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa might have been a village officer higher in rank than Grāmika and enjoyed 8 Kulas of land.

2. Dr. R. G. Basak translated Kuṭumbins as householders, and Dr. Ghoshal as heads of families.

3. Dr. Ghoshal equates the office of Jyeṣṭhakāyastha with that of Sheristadar of a modern district. *Hindu Revenue system*, p. 204, fn 2; cf. Mahākāyastha of the Ramganj plate.

4. Vyāpārins and Vyavahārins are officers carrying on affairs of the state in connection with land grants. *Ibid.* p. 205, fn. 2.



or leading men<sup>1</sup> referred to in the Dāmodarpur plates and in the Faridpur plates. Dr. Ghosal's suggestion<sup>2</sup> to identify the Viṣaya-mahattaras of the Faridpur plates with the Vyāpārins and Vyāvahārins of the same plates B.C.D. cannot be accepted, as in these plates the Mahattaras have been mentioned in addition to Vyapārins and Vyavahārins. Most probably the Mahattaras were men of position in the locality. Their representative capacity is perhaps to be understood from the Grant A, in which Prakṛtis (people) headed by eighteen leading men of the district have been alluded to. It cannot be ascertained whether they were elected representatives of the people or chosen by the government because of their eminent position in the locality. It is further known from the copper plates of the Gupta period and the Faridpur plates that before the actual sale was made, the record-keepers (pustapālas) would make all necessary enquiries to the titles to the lands concerned and would sever the land according to the standard measure of 8×9 reeds then prevalent. The Paharpur plate<sup>3</sup> specifically refers to a board of record-keepers headed by Divākaranandī. In some cases the Brāhmaṇas, leading men and heads of families were informed of the transaction possibly to raise objections, if there would have been any.

The above facts unmistakably point to high administrative efficiency of the local governments in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. Nothing is known of the existence of Adhiṣṭhānādhikaraṇa and the procedures of the sale of waste land in the Pāla and Sena periods. Both progress and retrogression are possible in the political system. But it must be observed that the Gupta plates hitherto discovered in Bengal (excepting the Gunaighar plate<sup>4</sup>) and the

1. We accept Mr. Pargiter's interpretation of Mahattara as men of position ; leading men ; III A. 1900, p. 123, ff. Dr. Bhattasali suggests that Viṣaya-mahattara is to be taken in the sense of Mahattaras in charge of affairs. But "leading men of the district" seems to be a better interpretation. See EI. XVII, p. 76.

2. *Hindu Revenue system*, p. 205.

3. EI. XX, p. 59.

4. IHQ. 1930, p. 40.



Faridpur plates record transaction between the state and the private persons who purchased lands for donating them for some meritorious purpose. The surviving seal-legends of the Viṣayādhikaraṇa go to show that the highest authority concerned were the district officers. The Pāla and Sena grants are royal bequests and to them are attached the seals of their Majesties themselves. The Viṣayapatis figure only as minor officials and it is hardly to be expected that the details of the district government are to be found in them. The Gunaighar plate of Vainyagupta, dated in 508 A.D., which records the grant of land to a Buddhist vihāra by the Emperor himself at the request of a dependent chief like that of the Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla, does not refer to the local officials connected with the execution of the land grants. The same is the case with the Vappaghoṣavaṭa grant of Jayanāga, Tippera grant of Lokanātha and the Asrafpur plates.

While emphasising the silence of the grants of our period on the detailed local administration, it must be noted that in the Pāla records Grāmika, Grāmapati, Dāśagrāmika, Mahattaras and others appear as local officials.

Grāmika or Grāmapati—He is the village headman. His office must have been of considerable responsibility. Most probably he was responsible for the collection of royal dues of the village under his care. In the Arthaśātra and Yājñavalkya he had got police functions, to keep the village free from thieves. He might have tried minor cases too.

Dāśagrāmika—Officer in charge of ten villages, perhaps corresponding to Aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa. He was perhaps to supervise the work of the Grāmikas under him.

Mahattara—In the Khalimpur plate we find both Mahāmahattaras and Mahattaras which go to show that there was some gradation of these officials or semi-officials. In addition to what has already been said of them, it is noted here that in the contemporary Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom in Mahārāṣṭra and southern Guzrat the



Mahattaras constituted village assemblies<sup>1</sup> which looked after and managed the public works of the villages. We have no evidence to show the existence of any village council in Bengal. But it may be presumed that they must have held very important position in the localities.

Lekhaka—He is mentioned only in the Ramganj plate. According to Śukra,<sup>2</sup> his duty was to keep accounts of income and expenditure, to receive and dispose of goods after making entries in the registers and to carry on correspondence. In the Cola records it was he who wrote the orders of the village assembly.<sup>3</sup>

Tadā-yuktas and Viniyuktas—Dr. Altekar takes Yuktas or Niyuktas and Upa-niyuktas as officers in charge of the clerical work connected with the village administration.<sup>4</sup> If this interpretation be correct, Tadā-yuktas and Vini-yuktas of the Pāla grants and Ramganj plate should be taken to be clerical officers attached to various offices. They have been generally mentioned after Viṣayapatis and Uparikas.

Besides these, we have Kṣetrapa, Kṣetrapāla, Prāntapāla, Tarika, Tarapati and various other unspecified officers who were more or less connected with the local government. Their duties and functions will be discussed in connection with the departments with which they were directly concerned.

### Town administration and guild organisation

Our records give absolutely no information as to how the administration of towns was carried on. Towns there must have been many. Rāmāvati, Mudgagiri were the headquarters of the Pālas, and Vikrampura of the Candras, Varmanas and Senas. The headquarters of the feudatory kings, Bhuktipatis and Viṣayapatis must have had some special arrangements. Nor do we know

1. Dr. Altekar : Rāṣtrakūṭas and their times. p. 205.

2. Śukra. II, 348.

3. SII. II. Ukkal. No. 10

4. Dr. Altekar, Op. cit. p. 197.



anything definitely about the communal organisations like guilds of merchants, of artisans, etc., though they had important corporate functions in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire<sup>1</sup> and the Gurjra-Pratihāra and Gāhaḍavāla kingdoms of Kanauj.<sup>2</sup> In the Deopara inscription of Vijayasena the scribe Śūlapāṇi has been described as 'Varendra-śilpī-goṣṭhī-cuḍāmaṇi' and it has been suggested that 'śilpī-goṣṭhī' may be taken to refer to the guild of Varendra artists. But it is hazardous to draw any inference from this expression of whose interpretation we cannot be sure.<sup>3</sup>

### Revenue and Expenditure

Great importance was laid on finances by the writers on ancient Indian polity and it is also clear from the fact that three high officers, Mahāmudrādhikṛta, Antraṅga-Vṛhaduparika and Mahākṣapaṭalika who were connected with the finance department, served the central government. In the Pāla records Mahāmudrādhikṛta and Antarāṅga-Vṛhaduparika are conspicuous by their absence but we have got another high officer Mahākartākrta who might have been connected with the revenue administration.

The sources of revenue may be classified under the following heads:—

- (1) Regular Taxes.
- (2) Occasional Taxes and Exactions.
- (3) Fines.
- (4) Income from government properties.
- (5) Tribute from feudatories.

#### REGULAR TAXES

In the Pāla grants the regular taxes mentioned by name are—  
(a) Bhāga, (b) Bhoga, (c) Kara, (d) Hiranya.

(a) Bhāga means the usual grain-share of the king. In the

1. Dr. Altekar, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 210, 202. <sup>6</sup>

2. *IHQ.* 1933, p. 121.

3. Mr. N. G. Majumdar, *IB.* p. 45; he takes goṣṭhī in the sense of 'host', 'multitude'.



Kalimpur plate of Dharmapāla an officer named *Ṣaṣṭhādhikṛta* is mentioned, who was most probably in charge of the sixth part of royal grain-share and it seems that the grain-share was levied at the old rate of the sixth part of the produce as recommended in the *Arthaśāstra* and *Smṛtis*.

(b) *Bhoga* means "the periodical supplies of fruits, firewood, flowers and the like, which the villagers had to furnish to the king." It is interesting to note that in the land grants it is specially said that the donee is to have the privilege of the enjoyment of *madhuka*, mango, jackfruit, betelnut and coconut trees. This goes to show that the king had some share from their income. This is further confirmed by the fact that in the *Sahitya Parisat* grant of *Viśvarūpasena* the income derived from the betel-leaf plantations is to be enjoyed by the donee.

(c) *Kara* means tax in general. In the *Arthaśāstra* it has been used to mean three kinds of taxes : (i) periodical tax over and above the king's customary grain-share, (2) emergency tax, (3) tax upon merchant's profits. *Kara* in our period may include taxes not specified in the grants which the people had to pay to the government.

(d) *Hiraṇya* has been explained generally to mean gold. It is always mentioned with *Bhāgabhogakara*. We are inclined to accept the meaning proposed by Dr. Ghoshal that it refers to king's share of certain crops paid in cash<sup>1</sup>.

Land revenue was assessed in cash in the *Sena* period and every grant specifically mentions the income derived from the lands donated in terms of current coins. The incidence of actual taxation cannot be precisely determined at the present state of our knowledge, although the *Sena* grants describe in minute details the lands granted. The relation between *Bhu-pāṭaka*, *Droṇa*, *Adhakā*, *Unmāna*,<sup>2</sup> and *Kāka*, is not known and also between *Purāṇa* and

1. Dr. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*. p. 61.

2. In the *Sunderban* plate of *Lakṣmanasena* it is said that according to the standard of 32 cubits—1 *unmāna*, and 1 *cnbit*—12 *aṅgulas*.



Kapardaka-purāṇa, nor have we any idea about the approximate value of Kapardaka-purāṇa.<sup>1</sup> But the reference in the Govindapura plate of Lakṣmaṇasena that each Droṇa yielded 15 Purāṇas proves that "standard rates of land assessment were known in this period." It is also clear from the Sahitya Parisat grant that lands having the same area in the same locality were not of equal value as income from them varied and it is quite probable that tax on agricultural land also varied according to its quality and also income from it.

The Gupta plates and the Faridpur plates refer to standard measurement of land, *aṣṭaka-navaka-nalābhyam* i.e.  $8 \times 9$  reeds. In the Pāla grants no reference is made to any standard of measurement. It must be noted that the seven Pāla plates that have hitherto come to light record the grant of at least a full village with well-defined boundaries. It cannot, therefore, be concluded that there was no fixed standard of measurement as the occasion perhaps did not arise. The grants of the Candras and the Varmanas who flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries respectively in East Bengal "specify the areas of lands granted in terms of the current land measure." The Sena grants clearly show that the standard units of length were not uniform in every locality but different systems of measurement in different parts. Four kinds of measurement are known from the Sena grants—(1) *Samataṭṭiyanala*<sup>2</sup> (2) *Vṛṣabhaṣan-karanala*<sup>3</sup> (3) the Nala current in *Varendrī*<sup>4</sup> and (4) the Nala of 56 cubits.<sup>5</sup>

(e) *Uparikara* – Dr. Altekar suggests that *Uparikara* is identical

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1. Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar suggests that *Kapardakapurana* is "Purāṇa which is shaped like a Kapardaka or cowrie.....It is a Rūpa class of coinage". "A Purāṇa must contain 52 ratis of silver". Carmichael Lectures, p.39-4 10.

2. The Barrackpore grant of Vijayasena.

3. The Naihati plate of Vallālasena and the Anulia plate of Lakṣmaṇasena. The standard was perhaps named after the name of Vijayasena who had got *Vṛṣabhaṣṇkara* as his *virūḷa*.

4. The Tarandighi plate of Lakṣmaṇasena.

5. The Govindapur plate of the same king.



with Bhogakara.<sup>1</sup> We are inclined to accept the meaning proposed by Dr. Ghoshal that it means the tax paid by temporary tenants<sup>2</sup>, as in the Bhagalpur grant Soparikara is one of the privileges of the donee in addition to the enjoyment of Bhāgabhogakra.

(f) Cauroddharaṇa – In all land grants one of the privileges of the donee is Cauroddharaṇa. Mr. N. G. Majumdar takes it to mean “with police protection”, while Dr. Ghoshal takes it to mean “with the exemption from the police tax”. It is quite likely that there might have been a general police-tax like modern Caukidari. Other regular taxes are not mentioned in the grants but some of them can be somewhat ascertained from the list of officers and their functions. The mention of Śaulkika and Gaulmika indicates that tolls and customs duties were important sources of revenues. Śulka in the Arthaśāstra stands for duties levied upon articles imported into the city, port dues, duty upon the sale of liquors, customs collected by the ferryman, and boundary officers, duty upon mining products, duty upon imported salt, duty upon animals intended for slaughter. The Tezpur Rock inscription of 829-30 A. D. refers to a legal dispute in Kāmarūpa involving a toll-collector.<sup>3</sup> Tarapati and Tarika are ferry-men and this perhaps indicates the prevalence of ferry-duties in the Pāla period. Probably the government regulated ferries either by state or private boats but it is clear that Tarapati and Tarika are royal officers.<sup>4</sup> In the Manahali grant Śaunika<sup>5</sup> or the superintendent of slaughter house is a royal officer and the Prāntapāla of the Mongyr plate of Devapāla may be compared with the Antapāla of the Arthaśāstra who is to levy transit duties.<sup>6</sup> Haṭṭapati or the superintendent of markets is a royal officer mentioned in the Ramganj plate of Išvarghoṣa and it is stated in

1. Dr. Altekar, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their times, p. 216.

2. Dr. Ghoshal, Op. Cit. p. 210.

3. JBORS. 1917. p. 508ff.

4. In Manu a scale of ferry dues from different classes of goods and persons is given. Bk. VIII, 404-6.

5. Śuna means slaughter-house. ‘Māṃsa vikṛetari,’ Hemacandra,

6. Arthaśāstra, Bk. II, 1,



the Khalimpur plate that income from the markets in the donated land would be enjoyed by the donee.

Gaulmika most probably means overseer or superintendent of forests.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these, mention must be made of the superintendents of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, etc. and other unspecified Adhyakṣas of the land grants who may be compared with the various superintendents of the Arthaśāstra.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Occasional taxes and exactions.

(a) Acaṭṭabhāṭṭapraveśa—This expression occurs in all grants and means that the lands granted should not be entered by Caṭṭas and Bhāṭṭas. Caṭṭas and Bhāṭṭas were regular and irregular military and police forces. When they were on march or encamped, the people of the locality had probably to supply their demands and other necessary things.

(b) Apahr̥ṭasarbapīḍā—The lands were granted "with immunity from all burdens." It has generally been taken to refer to forced labour. But it seems Sarbapīḍā has been used in very wide sense and may include many interference by the state, forced labour being one of them. It may also mean dues leviable at the time of the halt or departure of royal officers,<sup>3</sup> customary presents to the king or high officers on some ceremonial occasions and emergency taxes of the state mentioned in the Mahābhārata<sup>4</sup> and the Arthaśāstra<sup>5</sup> and Śukranīti.<sup>6</sup> Attention may be invited to the list of oppressors mentioned in four grants of the neighbouring province of Kāmarūpa. In the grant of Bālavarmaṇ (c. 990 A. D.)

1. EI. IV, 253. fn<sup>9</sup> and Fleet CII, p. 52. n<sup>4</sup>. In the Arthaśāstra Gulma-deya means dues paid to the army or police stations. Dr. R. G. Basak takes Gaulmika to be an officer in charge of a Gulma squadron.

2. Artha, Bk. II describes the functions of various superintendents.

3. A. Yādava grant; IA. VIX, p. 319. Tandontottam plates SII, Vol II, p. 531.

4. Mahā, XII. 87.

5. Artha. V. 2.

6. Śukra, IV. 2, 10.



the list of oppressors consist of the queen, the royal favourites, the eunuchs, the persons pasturing elephants and mooring boats, the officers tracking thieves as well as officers charged with the Uparikara tax and with the Utkheta import. They are repeated in the two grants of Ratnapāla (c. 1010 A. D.) and one grant of Indrapāla (c. 1060 A. D.).

(c) Piṇḍaka—It is mentioned only in the Khalimpur plate. Kielhorn identified it with Bhāgabhogakara and Dr. Ghoshal is of opinion that it probably stands for Hiraṇya. In our opinion it is the same as the Piṇḍakara of the Arthaśāstra which, according to the commentator Bhaṭṭa, means taxes levied upon whole villages.

(d) Ratnatrayasambhoga—It is mentioned only in the Mahali plate of Madanapāla. It is quite likely, as Dr. Ghoshal suggests, that it was probably a contribution from the villages for the support of the Buddhist faith. The Pālas were devout Buddhists and great builders. It may be that a tax was levied for the maintenance and upkeep of big Buddhist establishments. But the meaning of the term is far from being certain and it cannot be maintained that it was a general and regular tax, as it occurs only in one grant.

### (3) Fines.

Sahyadaśāparādha—This expression shows that fines were levied for offences. The traditional ten offences are—(a) three offences of the body, theft, murder and adultery, (b) four offences of speech, harsh, untruthful, libellous and pointless words, and (c) three offences of mind, coveting other's property, thinking of wrong and devotion to what is not true. Most probably in our period it stands for judicial fines in general. Donees of the grants enjoyed the income from the fines.<sup>1</sup> It seems, therefore, that justice was also a source of revenue.

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1. We cannot accept the opinion of Dr. Ghoshal that the expression Sahyadaśāparādha confers upon the donee the right to be exempted from the ordinary penalties for the commission of some of the traditional offences, Hindu Revenue System, p. 220.



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(4) Income from Government properties, crown lands and other rights of the state on land and water.

It cannot be stated with certainty whether the state had its own lands at this period because no instance of crown land is known. But the possibility is strongly there that the state might have owned some land which had lapsed as heirless property, confiscated properties, lands purchased for state purpose or waste lands brought under cultivation by the government. As regards the general question whether the state claimed to be the proprietor of cultivable land, Dr. Altekar's remarks on this point are applicable in the case of Pāla and Sena grants. "The numerous copper plate grants, giving villages to temples and Brahmanas, assign to the donees the government right to the taxes derived from the land and other sources; there is not a single case where the proprietary right in the entire land under cultivation in any village has been transferred to the donee. The plate uses a long series of expressions specifying the right accruing to the donees, but not a single expression is used in any of our grants, suggesting that the donees acquired the proprietary rights in the cultivable lands in the village. Even the right of ejection is nowhere mentioned. It is therefore clear that in our period the state did not claim the ownership of the entire soil of the realm."<sup>1</sup> The fact that Viśvarūpasena should find it necessary to give only detached pieces of cultivable land situated in the different corners of different villages shows that the state was not, and did not claim to be, proprietor of the entire realm. In this grant (the Sahitya Parisat plate of Viśvarūpasena) there are actual cases of previous purchase when land, and not the revenue rights, was assigned to the donees.

Although the proprietorship of cultivable land was not claimed, the state in addition to the taxes and privileges mentioned above probably conceded the following additional rights to the donee. We quote them from the Rampal grant of Śrīcandradeva who ruled in the 10th century in East Bengal. They are Satala, Soddeśa, Sāmrap-

1. Dr. Altekar, Op. Cit.



anasa, Saguvākanārikela, Salavaṇa, Sajalasthala, Sagarttoṣara. They are more or less same in all grants. Salavaṇa is only met with in this grant. The Mongyr grant has in addition to them Satṛiṇa, and Samatsya, the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena has Sabana and the Naihati grant has Sabhāṭaviṭapa. Messers R. D. Banerjee,<sup>1</sup> R. G. Basak<sup>2</sup> and N. G. Majumdar have taken Satala and Sodḍeśa to mean land with bottom and surface, i.e., the with the underground right and the surface right. Messrs G. P. Sarkar<sup>3</sup> and K. M. Gupta<sup>4</sup> take them to mean low and high land. Sāmrapanasa-saguvāka-nārikela means with mango, jackfruit, betelnut and coconut trees. Sajalasthala means with land and water. According to Mr. G. P. Sarkar,<sup>5</sup> Jala included tanks, wells, lakes, etc., while Sthala probably included various gardens. Sagarttoṣara means with pits and barren land. Salavaṇa means with salt. Satṛiṇa and Samatsya mean with grass and fishes, Sabana with forests and Sabhāṭaviṭapa with forests and branches.

Now the question is whether the state claimed some rights over the land and things mentioned above. No definite answer is possible because the above expressions can be taken to be the descriptions of the land granted. But against this view it may be pointed out that in the Arthaśāstra mines, fisheries, salt were state monopolies. In the Gupta period the state was the owner of the waste land.<sup>6</sup> The most interesting evidence in this connection comes from the Gāhaḍavāla inscription in which Gokara, Jalakara, Lavaṇakara in addition to the reference of state monopoly of mines are taxes that are to be paid to the donees.<sup>7</sup> With this

1. EI. XV, p. 259.

2. Ibid, XII, p. 35.

3. JDL. XVI, p. 43.

4. IA. XLI, p. 74.

5. See above.

6. EI. XV, p. 189; Dr. Ghoshal. Op. cit, p. 206.

7. IA. XV; EI. IX, No 11; Ibid. VIII, No. 14 D; Ibid. X No. 23; Ibid. XI. No. 20; Ibid. XI, p. 24; also Tandonotolam plate of Vinayandivikramavarman. S11. 11., p. 531-2.



specific mention of these taxes in the Gāhaḍavāla records we are rather inclined to accept the view that the state claimed certain rights over the land and things referred to above and these rights were alienated to the donees. Of course, it is not easy to understand what right the state claimed over the pits, but it must be said that these land grants are title-deeds and therefore legal documents in a sense and as such the description in them should be very wide and general, covering every possible right the state could claim and was prepared to concede to the person in whose favour they were drawn up. Still more difficult it is to explain the significance of another expression 'ṛṇaputi gocaraparyants.' It occurs generally after the description of the boundaries but in the Naihati plate of Vallālasena it occurs among the privileges conferred on the donee. In the Mongyr plate we have Saṭṭṇa. Two interpretations are possible—(1) the lands with boundaries thus defined up to the pasturage, grass, puti plants and grazing ground for cattle, or (2) with the right conceded to the donee over these things. In the Arthaśāstra one of the duties of the superintendent of pastures was to set up pasture lands in troublesome tracts intervening between the village.<sup>1</sup> In the Pāla records Kṣetrapāla and Kṣetrapa whose functions may be compared with those of the superintendent of pasture of the Arthaśāstra are two royal officers. In the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records the right to utilise grass, fuel, etc. growing on the waste land was transferred to the donee.<sup>2</sup> It is quite likely that the state derived some income from the pasture lands.

#### (5) TRIBUTES FROM FEUDATORIES

Our information about this source of revenue is wanting. But it is almost certain that the vassal kings paid some tributes to the imperial government in the normal circumstances. It is stated in the Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla that kings of northern India

1. Artha, 11 34.

2. Dr. Altekar, Op. Cit. p. 241.



who were most probably dependent kings made many presents to the emperor.

### Expenditure

No information is available from the land grants regarding the expenditure of the state. The author of the Arthaśāstra supplies a list of 18 specified items of expenditure. Besides, gifts to Brahmanas, relief to the poor, the sick and the destitute and pensions to the dependents of dead public servants are also recommended. Śukra's list of expenditure on specified items is interesting for our purpose, as he was a medieval writer.<sup>1</sup> The state expenditure should be in the following scale :— $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the revenue for the army,  $\frac{1}{12}$ th for gifts,  $\frac{1}{12}$ th for principal officers,  $\frac{1}{12}$ th for heads of departments,  $\frac{1}{12}$ th for king's personal expenditure and  $\frac{1}{4}$ th to be deposited in the treasury. The Pālas and Senas had to maintain huge armies and the constant wars must have been a great strain on their finances. Educational and religious establishments and other public works associated with the names of the Pāla and Sena kings also cost the treasury. Both the Pālas and Senas granted many plots of lands to the Brahmanas and for other meritorious purposes.

### The Military

Very few things regarding the army department are known from the inscriptions. The following officers and their functions, as can be suggested from their names, will give some idea about the organisation of the army.

The highest officer of the army department was Mahāsenāpati or commander-in-chief who was, as we have already stated, one of the members of the ministry,

Mahāpādamulika—He is mentioned in the Ramganj plate of Íśvaraghoṣa after Mahāsenāpati. The technical meaning is not known. In the Arthaśāstra Pādika is a military officer and Mūla

1. Śukra. 1. p. 315-6.



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means hereditary troops.<sup>1</sup> It can be therefore suggested that he was in charge of infantry or hereditary troops.

Mahābhogapati or Mahābhogika—Dr. R. G. Basak takes him to be the chief groom but does not cite any authority. He is always mentioned along with the army officers. Bhoga is the technical name of a particular kind of array of soldiers in the Arthasāstra.<sup>2</sup> Therefore he can be taken to be a military officer.

Mahātantrādhikṛta—He is also mentioned with the army officers in the Ramganj plate. In Monier Williams's dictionary one meaning of the word Tantra is an army. He may also be taken to be an army officer.

Mahavyūhapati—Officer in charge of arrays.

Mahādaṇḍanāyaka—In the Arthasāstra Nāyaka is a military officer. "Caturāṅga valādhyaḥṣa senāni daṇḍanāyaka"—Hemacandra. Some scholars have taken him to be a judicial officer. According to Mr. R. D. Banerjee, he is the chief criminal judge.

Nāvādhyaḥṣa—Mentioned in the Pāla grants. He was probably the head of the navy.

Mahāsāmanta—He was perhaps the head of the Sāmantas (feudatories) but is a regular officer in some of the Pāla grants. He probably enjoyed high military rank.

Mahāpīlupati—Officer in charge of the elephants.

Mahāgaṇastha—According to Amara, 27 elephants, 27 chariots 81 horses, and 135 foot-soldiers constitute one Gaṇa. The officer in charge of a Gaṇa was called Gaṇastha. 1 chariot, 1 elephant, 3 horses, and 5 foot soldiers was called a Paṭṭi. 3 Paṭṭis formed one Senāmukha and 3 Senāmukhas one Gulma and 3 Gulmas one Gaṇa.

Koṭṭapati—Officer in charge of forts.

Prāntapāla—Mentioned in the Pāla grants. He is the officer

1. For every ten members of each of the constituents of the army, there must be one commander called Pādika; ten Pādikas under a Senapati; ten Senāpatīs under a Nāyaka. Artha. X. 6.

2. Wings and front, capable to turn against an enemy, is a snake-like army (Bhoga), Artha XI 6.



in charge of frontier fortresses. Vṛhadhanuṣka—the chief archer (Rānganj plate).

Besides these, we have Nauvala—hastyāśva—vyāpṛtaka—officers in charge of the navy, elephants and horses. The Pālas and Senas were constantly at war with their neighbours and the Pālas were the rival of the Pratihāras of Kanauj and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mālkhed for the overlordship of Northern India. The army must have received the utmost attention of the monarchs because it was the mainstay of their power and prestige. It is also clear from the account of the Muslim writers<sup>1</sup> that the Pālas maintained huge armies. The merchant Sulaiman observes that “the king of Rahma (Bengal) had great strength in troops, elephants and horses. His troops are more numerous than those of the Balhara (the Rāṣṭrakūṭas) and the king of Jurz (Gurjjaras). It is told that the Barua king of Kanauj (the Gurjjara-Pratiharas) keeps four armies in the four quarters. Each of these numbers 7 to 9 lakhs of men. Coming to the details of the army of Rahma the same writer says, “When he goes out to battle, he is followed by about 50,000 elephants. There are from ten to fifteen thousand men in his army who are employed in fuelling and washing clothes. Sulaiman’s account seems to be based on exaggerated report. In Ibn Khurda’s account the number of the elephants is 5,000. In the Arthaśāstra the army consisted of four classes of soldiers—(1) Maula, (hereditary), (2) Bṛtaka (mercenary), (3) Śrenī (corporation) and (4) Aṭavī (wild tribes). In

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1. The following observations of the Muslim writers go to show the identification of the Pāla king (or kingdom) with Rahmi. The kingdom of Rahmi “extends both along the sea and the continent. It is frequently at war with Balhara (the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king and the Gurz (Gurjjaras) on whose kingdoms it borders. It is bounded by an inland kingdom called Kamrun (Kāmarūpa.)” “There is a stuff made in this country which is not found elsewhere so fine and delicate that a dress made of it may pass through a signet ring. It is made of cotton”. This of course refers to famous muslin. As all these descriptions agree well with the Pāla kingdom, we have got no hesitation in identifying Rahma with the Pāla kingdom. For the account of Muslim writers, see Elliot, History of India, 1. p. 5, 25, 36.



the period under review it seems that the army also consisted of four classes of soldiers. The office of Mahāpādamulika suggests the existence of Maulabāla. It is interesting to note that in the list of soldiers from many countries Gauḍas also figure in the Pāla grants and it is quite possible that Gauḍa forces were Maulabāla. It is clear from the Pāla inscriptions that the Pālas recruited soldiers from many countries. In all grants soldiers of Mālava, Khaśa, Hūṇa, Kulika, Kaṇṇāta, Lāṭa are referred to. The Nālandā grant of Devapāla adds the name of Oḍra and the Manahali plate Coḍa. It seems, therefore, that the Pālas had to depend mainly on mercenary soldiers who were recruited from every possible quarter. In this period the feudatories supplied soldiers to the suzerain. Rāmapāla was assisted a great deal by the forces and resources of the Sāmāntas in his suppression of the Kaivarta revolt. The same monarch in order to secure the help of the feudatories allied himself with the Sāmāntas of the forest regions.<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim writers and the epigraphic records all refer to the elephants, horses and infantry and this is also corroborated by the evidence of the Rāmacarita. Rāmapāla prepared for his expedition with these threefold forces.<sup>2</sup> Thus it seems that of the traditional caturaṅga forces the chariots were abandoned.<sup>3</sup> According to the testimony of the Muslim writers, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas possessed the best infantry because their seat of the government was in the mountains and the Gurjjara-Pratihāras had the finest cavalry. But the elephant forces of the Pālas were the largest. The Pālas counted a great deal in their wars on the elephants. So much so they depended on this force that Al-Masudi remarks that Rahma (the Pāla king) takes field only in winter, because elephants

1. Rāmacarita 1/43.

2. Ibid 1/45.

3. The formidable array of the mighty elephants, horses and chariots of Dharmapāla have been mentioned in the Gwalior Prāśasti of Bhoja, (EI, xviii, p. 101). But much stress cannot be laid on it, as the composers of prāśastis described army from traditional military phraseology.



cannot endure thirst and can only go in cold season. The mighty elephants of Bengal were a dread to foreign powers. It is stated in the Bargaon grant of the Kāmarūpa king Ratnapāla that the walls of the impregnable fort built by him are so strong that they would give fever to the heads of the untameable elephants of the Gauḍa king.<sup>1</sup> This is an eloquent testimony to the strength of the elephant forces of Bengal.

Cavalry was not neglected. The Pālas and Senas had to undertake military campaigns in foreign countries and the former was at constant struggle with the Pratihāras who were strong in cavalry. Bengal had no good breed of horses. Horses were imported from foreign countries. It is said in the Mongyr plate of Devapāla that the horses met their old mates in the Kamboja country. Kamboja was reputed for the finest breed in ancient times.<sup>2</sup>

The actual methods of warfare are not known but the existence of the offices of Mahāvyūhapati and Mahābhogika would go to indicate that soldiers were arranged in different arrays as would suit the circumstances. It is also clear from the statement of Al-Masudi that the army had a large number of camp-followers, though the approximate number 15,000 given by him seems to be considerably exaggerated. Innocent lives and property of the gods and Brahmanas were honoured. It is important to notice that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa prince Śivarāja who led the vanguard of Rāmapāla's army enquired about particular villages and Viṣayas in order to ensure the safety of the properties of the temples and Brahmanas.

### Navy

Bengal is the country of big rivers and has an extensive seaboard. A mercantile navy was indispensable for commerce and trade in different parts of the country and with coastal countries. It is evident from the evidence<sup>3</sup> recorded by Fa-hien, Yuan Chwang

1. JASB, LXVII, p. 115-18.

2. Artha, II. 30.



and the Nālandā plate of Devapāla that there was regular intercourse with the Far Eastern countries. Writing about 912 A.D., Ibn Khurdaṇ remarks that between Rahmi and other kingdoms communication is kept by ships. Ship's mast and harbours are referred to in the Faridpur grants of Dharmāditya.

The navy was not only necessary for commerce and trade but it was also extremely useful both for defence and offence in Bengal. The Bengal kings always maintained a fleet. The camp of victory at Kṛipura in the Gunaighar inscription of Vainyagupta, dated in 508 A. D., is described as full of ships, elephants and horses. The Haraha inscription of the Maukhari king Iśānavarman<sup>1</sup> refers to the Gauḍa people as 'Samudrāśrayān'. Attention may be invited to the story of colonisation of Ceylon by prince Vijaya of Vaṅga which must have taken place<sup>2</sup> before the time of Aśoka and to Kālidāsa's remarks<sup>3</sup> on the nautical resources of Bengal. The importance of Nāvādhyakṣa and nau-vala-vyāpṛtaka needs hardly to be emphasised. In every Pāla grant the royal fleet is first mentioned in the description of the camp of victory. The royal camp at Pāṭaliputra is thus described in the Khalimpur plate: "Sa-khalu Bhāgirathi-patha-pravattamāna nānāvidha-nauvāṭaka-sampā-dita-setubandha-nihita-śaila-śikhara-śreṇī-vibhramata". The Kamauli plate records a naval victory won by Kumārapāla's minister and general Vaidyadeva. It is known from the Deopara plate of Vijayasena that he sent a fleet to meet the pāścātyacakra. A sudden cavalry raid proved disastrous for the Senas who were ousted from western and northern Bengal within a very short time but perhaps for their navy the descendants of Lakṣmaṇasena could maintain themselves in east Bengal for a long time. Nothing illustrates more forcibly the supreme necessity of a fleet in Eastern

1. EI, vol. XIV, 117.

2. Early Seamen of India, Asutosh Jubilee Volume, Orientalia, Pt. 2. p. 105

3. Raghuvamśa IV. 36



Bengal than the fact that the Delhi Sultan Balban in his expedition in 1183 A. D. against the rebellious governor, Tughril Khan, had to seek the assistance of Danuja Rāja of Sonargaon in order to prevent his escape by boat.<sup>1</sup>

### Defences

The Jayaskandhāvāra or the camp of victory from which the royal grants were issued seems to have been well-protected and strongly fortified. Mudgagiri (modern Mongyr) was perhaps the strategic point, where the Pālas concentrated their forces to check the Pratihāra advance, because it is the Jayaskandhāvāra in three Pāla grants.<sup>2</sup> Pāṭaliputra is the camp of victory in the Khaliampur plate and Vilāsapura was at the time of Mahipāla. Madanapāla issued his grant from Rāmāvati, the city built by his father Rāmapāla. The Sena grants upto the time of Lakṣmaṇasena were issued from Vfkramapura and during the the time of Keśavasena the camp of victory was at Phalgugrāma, probably somewhere in Eastern Bengal.

It seems that the Senas had their administrative headquarters at three strategic points. The Pāla power was set at naught twice in East Bengal—first by the Candras and then by the Varmans and Vikramapura was the capital of both these powers. The Senas by establishing their headquarters at Vikramapura removed that danger. A strong and well-fortified Gaṇḍa or Laknauti was extremely useful to check any foreign invader from the west, advancing along the banks of the Ganges through the Rajmahal hills as the advance and occupation of northern Bengal by the Pratihāras would show it. Again, it would have been advantageous with headquarters at Nudiah (Navadwip?) to oppose any foreign power advancing through southern Bihar and Birbhum as the Paikore inscription of the Cedi Karna would indicate it. This would also serve the purpose of checking any invasion through Orissa and Midnapore.

1. Elliot, vol. III p. 196.

2. This is also corroborated by the evidence of the Jodhpur inscription of Pratihāra Bauka which records a Pratihāra victory at Mudgagiri over the Gaṇḍa king.



Besides, forts were constructed at strategic points both for external and internal defence. The provincial governors and district officers must have some garrisons under them for maintaining peace and tranquility of the realm.

### Military Secretariat

• In the Ramganj plate of *Īśvaraghoṣa Mahāvalādhikaraṇika* is an important officer. The name itself would go to suggest that he was in charge of the military secretariat. This indicates in a way that every important department had a different secretariat of its own. *Mahāvalakoṣṭhika* is also an officer of the military department in the same inscription. He may be taken to be the officer-in-charge of the armoury. One of the clay seals of the Gupta period discovered by Bloch at Basrah in *‘Tirabhukti* refers to *Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*.’ Dr. Ghosal takes it to mean the office of Treasury of the War Department and remarks that this slight hint is sufficient to show that in the provinces ( and almost certainly in the central government as well ) the department of the military finance was separated from that of civil finance. This conclusion can hardly be accepted as the interpretation of the word *‘Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*’ as the office of armoury keeper or the commissariat seems to be more probable.

### Police Department

It has already been stated that there was probably a police-tax for maintaining the police force. *Caurodharaṇika* and *Daṇḍapāśika* figure in almost all grants and seem to be high police officers. Though the function of *Caurodharaṇika* cannot be precisely ascertained, he was in all probability in charge of all criminal matters under his jurisdiction. *Daṇḍika*, *Daṇḍapāṇi* or *Daṇḍapāṇika* also seem to be police officers.

The functions of *Grāmika*, *Dāśagrāmika*, *Kṣetrapa* have been discussed elsewhere. In addition to their duties already observed, it may be noted here that they might have policing duties also. In the *Arthaśāstra* the *Vivitabhārtā*, guardian of pasture land, is to



examine *inter alia* the passports of those lurking on out of the way tracts, to make the lower forest region safe from thieves, to ensure security against thieves, to escort caravans and to protect cattle.<sup>1</sup> The village headman is to compensate the caravan for theft or removal of their goods at night within the village limits, the superintendent of pastures is to be liable for their loss within the village boundary, while the officer charged with the arrest of thieves in other cases. If the loss of merchandise occurs in such parts of the country as are not provided even with such security, the people in the boundaries of the place shall contribute to make up the loss. If there are no people in the boundaries, the people of 5 or 10 villages in the neighbourhood shall make up the loss.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Altekar draws attention to a 12th century inscription of Rajputana which embodies an agreement on the part of the townsmen of a city that they would be responsible for any thefts that might occur in their town. The king of the place had made arrangements about the watch and ward of the place.<sup>3</sup>

It will not be out of place here to discuss the position and function of another officer variously designated, Dauḥsāadhanika, Duḥsādhyasāadhanika, Dauḥsādhyasāadhanika. He always figures before Cauraddharanika. That he was an important officer is clear from the fact that the epithet 'mahā' is affixed to him. Dr. R. G. Basak takes him either to be a porter or superintendent of villages. It is not known what is the technical meaning of the term. The literal meaning is that one who is entrusted with difficult undertakings. We would rather suggest that he was the superintendent of spies whose functions and importance in the work of the government have been so much emphasised by the author of the Arthaśāstra. He might have been connected with many departments but certainly very intimately with the police department.

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1. Artha. II. 34.

2. Ibid. IV. 13. The liability of the three officers, the guardian of the pasture land, village headman and Caurarajjuka is repeated in Yājñavalkya. II. 271.

3. E1. XI, p. 40.



It is quite probable that the police officers mentioned above were under provincial governors, district officers and officers in-charge of cities.

Besides these, mention may be made here of some of the officers who are body-guards and the like of the kings, chiefs and officials.

- Antaḥpratihāra—probably guard of the inner palace.
- Ābhyantrika—probably a class of royal servants of the harem.
- Vāsagārika—probably in charge of the royal palaces.
- Śīrorakṣika—probably a class of body-guards.

Khaṇḍagrāha—It is probably the same as Khaṇḍaraka of the Chamba inscriptions. which, according to Dr. Vogel, means a class of body-guards carrying swords.

Āṅgarakṣas—body-guard s.

Ārohakas—royal guards on horse.

### Judicial Department

Very few facts regarding this important branch of administration are known. Some judicial officers no doubt figure in the inscriptions but their duties and functions are not precisely known. Mahādharmādhyakṣa or the chief judge was at the central government. The king with some selected officials might have tried important cases. The provincial governors and district officers might have some judicial functions.

Mahādaṇḍanāyaka—He may be taken either to be an army officer or a judicial officer.

Dāśaparādhika—The officer who tried cases connected with traditional offences. He is mentioned only in the Khalimpur plate.

Pramātr<sup>1</sup>—The dictionary meaning is proving, evidence,

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1. Dr. Beni Prasad takes Pramātr̥s to be surveyors and measurers but does not cite any authority. State in Ancient India, p. 299. In the Madhuban plate of Harṣavardhana the Pramātr̥s are mentioned after Dausādhanikas and the dūtaka mahāsāmanta, mahārāja Skandagupta has also the title pramātr̥. EI, Vol. I, No. II.



who or what is proof or authority. He may be taken to be a judicial officer.

Aṅgikaraṇika—The officer in charge of oath. He was, therefore a judicial officer and has been mentioned only in the Rāṃganj plate.

Daṇḍika, Daṇḍaśakti, Daṇḍapāṇika, Daṇḍapāśika—we have suggested that they were probably police officers. Daṇḍa means punishment and therefore can equally be taken to be judicial officers.

### Miscellaneous officers

The functions of the following officers cannot be explained either etymologically or technically : Ekasarakā, Autthitāsanika, Thakura, Mahākāṭuka, Śāntakika. All of them figure in the Rāṃganj plate. In the same record Karmakāra is mentioned as a royal officer. Most probably he is a state artisan. Ekapātra occurs in the Sunderban plate of Dommaṇapāla.

### Feudatories

Most of the ancient Indian empires had feudatory rulers under the central government. The Pāla and Sena kingdoms were no exception to this general feature. Some parts were under the direct administration of the imperial government and some parts under subordinate chiefs. In almost all grants the following personages enjoying royal or semi-royal status are mentioned—

Rājan—Vassal kings.

Rājanyaka—One having the status of a Rājā.

Rāṇaka—He figures after the royal consort. According to Dr. Basak, Rāṇakas were a class of subordinate chiefs.

The most curious fact is that these three royal personages are also mentioned in the Rāṃganj plate of Mahāsāmantādhipati Dommana pāla, who were, as it appears from their titles, mere feudatory rulers. This can of course be explained by the assumption that feudatory rulers had got subordinate chiefs under them and that they had pretension to semi-independent position or royal status in the extra-



ordinary political circumstance.<sup>1</sup> The list of officers in these two grants goes to show that the government of the feudatories was replica of the imperial system.

The Gunaighar grant of Vainyagupta shows that the vassal princes sometimes accepted office under the central authority. The frontier king Mahārāja Vijayasena, dātaka of the grant, was officer in charge of the elephants and had three high-sounding titles. In the commentary of the Rāmacarita the vassal rulers are called Sāmantas. In the Vappaghoṣavaṭa grant of Jayanāga a Sāmanta was in charge of a Viṣaya. It cannot be definitely stated whether Raṇasūra of Dakṣiṇa-Rādha, Dharmapāla of Daṇḍabhukti, Govindacandra of Vaiṅāladeśa were feudatories under Mahipāla I. They might have fought against the Cola<sup>2</sup> emperor either on their own account or for Mahipāla I. It is clear from the Baghaura image inscription of

1. Mr. R. D. Banerjee suggested that palæographically Iṣvaraghoṣa should be placed before Vijayasena and Vallālasena (Banglārā Itihāsa, p. 330,). Mr. N. G. Majumdar remarks that the characters of the Ramganj plate represent a variety of northern alphabets which is evidently earlier than those used in the Sena grants and akin to those found in the copper-plates of the later Pālas, e. g. the Bangar grant of Mahipāla I and the Amgachi grant of Vighrahapāla IB, p. 149, Mr. N. N. Vasu has rightly pointed out that Dhekkari, from where the grant was issued, is to be located in the Goalpara district of Assam and the river Joṭoda, according to the Kālikāpurāṇa, flowed through Kāmarūpa. The characters of the Ramganj plate have close resemblance with those of the Puspabhadra plate of Dharmapāla who flourished towards the close of the eleventh century A. D.. Iṣvaraghoṣa was most probably a feudatory ruler on the north-eastern frontier of the pāla empire and issued his grant during the troublesome days of the Kaivarta revolt. This is in a way strengthened by the fact that after the suppression of the Kaivarta rebellion Rāmapāla sent a general to conquer Kāmarūpa (Rāmacarita, 3/47). Dommanapāla granted his charter in 1196 A. D. i. e., just on the eve of the Muslim conquest when the central government perhaps became weak. The fact that these two chiefs were bold enough to issue their grants without any reference to the paramount power perhaps indicates that their attitude was defiant to the imperial power.

2. Trimulai Rock inscription of Rājendracola B1, IX, p. 229.



the 3rd year of Mahīpāla I<sup>1</sup> that his sovereignty was acknowledged in East Bengal. Daṇḍabhukī and Dakṣiṇa-Rādhā appear to be small principalities. All these suggest that the chiefs of these places must have had an overlord, though there is no evidence to prove Mahīpāla's authority over them. The existence of the subordinate chiefs is definitely proved by the evidence of the Rāmācārīta and the commentator gives a list of 14 such rulers who helped Rāmāpāla in the recovery of Varendra from the Kaivartas.

The Pāla kings like Dharmapāla and Devapāla conquered many kingdoms of north-western India. The policy adopted towards a conquered country seems to be what was advocated by Manu. The conqueror should not annex the enemy's state but should appoint a near relative of the former ruler as his own nominee on the throne. The contemporary Muslim writer Sulaiman writes, "When a king subdues a neighbouring state in India, he places over it a man belonging to the family of the fallen prince, who carries on the government in the name of the conqueror. The inhabitants would not suffer it to be otherwise." If the identification of Indrāyudha of the Jaina Harivaṃśa with Indrarāja of the Bhāgalpur grant be correct, the placing of Cakrāyadha on the throne of Kanouj by Dharmapāla perhaps points to that fact.

The control exercised by the paramount power varied according to circumstances. If the central government was strong, the subordinate rulers paid customary obedience to the imperial court. Most probably fiscal dues were regularly sent to the imperial exchequer. Nothing particular is known of the relation between the imperial power and the feudatories. The Agnipurāṇa enjoins the following duties on the part of the feudatories which may be taken to be the relation in normal circumstances. "In times of war the feudatories must be at the beck and call of the sovereign. They should mark out the sovereign's friends from his foes. They should rally supporters to king's banners and

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1. E1. XV11, p. 353.



collect troops for him. They should appease the public feeling for him. They must help him with their resources."<sup>1</sup>

The Chatsu inscription of Bālāditya records the services of a line of feudatory rulers to the Pratihāra empire.<sup>2</sup> Sulaiman observes that the ambassador from the imperial court was received with great respect in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire and the ambassadors like modern Political Agents in Native States exercised general powers of superintendence. The same practice might have been in vogue in Bengal.

But when the imperial power was weak, the feudatories tried to assume semi-independent attitude. Nothing illustrates more clearly the changed attitude of the Sāmantas of the Pāla empire than that Rāmapāla had to secure their service after a great deal of persuasion. In ordinary circumstances it is to be expected that they would stand by the dispossessed prince in the critical period of the Kaivarta rebellion. Rāmapāla had to meet personally the principal Sāmantas<sup>3</sup> and implore their assistance which he secured with the promise of further increase of territory and reward of money.<sup>4</sup> If the arms and resources of the vassals were a strength to the imperial power, they were also a source of weakness. Rebellions and risings due to general discontent or weakness of the central government would be generally under the banner of a feudatory chief. Most probably the ambitious Kaivarta chief Divvoka was a subordinate chief of the Pālas, who, taking advantage of the misgovernment of Mahipāla II and consequent general discontent, raised the standard of revolt and ousted the Pālas from Varendra for a considerable time. The powers and prestige of powerful chiefs were sometimes a challenge to the imperial power.

1. Agni Purāṇa, Ed. Manmatha Dutt CCXLI, 16-28.

2. EI, XI, p. 11.

3. Rāmacarita, 1/43.

4. Ibid, 1/45.



It will be interesting to note the following grades of rulers in which they are classified by the author of Śukranīti :—

Designation	Annual Revenues of Karṣas.
1. Sāmanta	1 to 3 lacs.
2. Māṇḍalika	3 to 10 lacs.
3. Rājā	10 to 20 lacs.
4. Māhārājā	20 to 50 lacs.
5. Svarāt	50 to 100 lacs.
6. Samrāt	1 crore to 10 crores.
7. Virāt	10 to 50 crores.
8. Sārvabhauma	Universal monarchy.

### Some general observations

Summing up the principles of Hindu government (which are equally applicable in the case of the Pāla and Sena governments), Dr. Beni Prosad observes, "The principles which underlay the Hindu system of governance bear a partial resemblance to the principle of medieval European polity. It was saturated through and through with the principles of what for convenience may be called federal-feudalism.....When applied to ancient India they must be shorn of their European association.....They are only meant to imply that, as a rule, a Hindu kingdom comprised a number of feudatories who enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy, that they themselves might have sub-feudatories of a similar status under them and so on to the third, fourth or fifth degree. A big empire was partly a series of alliances, partly a series of relationships of suzerainty and vassalage and partly an area of directly administered territory.....Under every regime, suzerain or feudal, the village was the ultimate unit of the society. It enjoyed a sort of social or legal autonomy, and was administered, at least from the Gupta period onwards, in consultation with village elders. Here was another type of localism. Finally, there were a number of associations and corporations, religious, economic and social, which enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy."

"The Hindu state recognised no restrictions on its activities...



From time to time it elected to propagate Dharma, to inculcate and enforce morality, to maintain or improve the social order, to encourage learning, education and art, to subsidise various academies, to regulate industry and commerce, to foster agriculture, to relieve the distress from famine and calamities, to establish hospitals, rest-houses, charity halls, etc. All this it essayed to do in addition to its primary functions of defence, order and justice." These are not mere generalizations without having any foundation on real state of things. The various religious missions to Tibet in the Pāla period, the donations to *nitipāṭhakas*<sup>1</sup> and to learned and pious men, the assurances<sup>2</sup> in the Pāla grants that the kings followed the spirit of the Śāstras, controlled those that swerved from the path of righteousness and kept the castes confined to their respective spheres of activity, the control exercised on the great universities like Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā and Jagaddala by appointing their heads and conferring degrees on great scholars, construction and maintenance of these monasteries as the recent excavations at Nālandā and Paharpur have revealed and the various public works still associated with the name of the Pāla and Sena monarchs—all these clearly prove that the government exerted their utmost for the welfare of the people in almost every sphere of activity.

This wide scope of activity of the state raises the question of checks on the powers of the king. Theoretically the king's power was unlimited. No doubt he had the ultimate authority in shaping the policy of the state. But the ministers and high officers of the state had some voice. It was they who advised and who executed the decisions of the king. Great ministers like Garga, Darbhapaṇi and Vaidyadeva were highly respected by the monarchs and certainly they influenced the state affairs of their time. We have one king, namely, Mahīpāla II, who did not pay heed to the counsels of the ministers and the result was misgovernment

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1. Edilpur and Madanpara grants.

2. Mongyr and Nālandā grants of Devapāla, the Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla and the Amgāchī plate of Vīgrahapāla III.



and and Kaivarta revolt which cost him his life and throne.<sup>1</sup> A king, however autocratic he might have been, did not try to change the political system itself. He could by his temperament and predilections influence the administration of his reign, but the polity itself remained unchanged. The king was the protector, preserver and promoter of the society, religion and the body politic but not the maker of it. So far as the society and religion were concerned, the Śāstras and the religious books were the final authority. The repeated assurances by the Buddhist Pala kings that they followed the spirit of the Śāstras, controlled those that swerved from the path of righteousness and kept the castes confined to their respective duties are not without significance. Customs of the country were always honoured. The presence of powerful feudatory kings served as no inconsiderable check on the king.

It may be argued that the land grants which are the main sources of our information for the administrative system described above are more or less formal in character in the description of the list of the officers. The largest number of officials are mentioned in the Raṅganj plate of Mahāmāṇḍalika Išvaraghoṣa. Most probably he was a feudatory chief and assumed semi-independent attitude in abnormal political circumstances when the imperial power was extremely weak. This grant corresponds in this respect to the Panchobh plate of Mahārājādhirāja Mahāmāṇḍalika Saṃgrāmaguptadeva<sup>2</sup> of about the 12th century A. D. which also supplies a number of officials otherwise unknown. Whatever might have been their political power in actual reality, their political pretension perhaps led them to enumerate as many officers as they could. If their command over so many officers is to be doubted, it would be the natural presumption that their suzerain must have at least these officers under them. It must be observed here that in all grants it has been explicitly said that there were other unspecified officers in addition to the specified ones. Perhaps only the high officials and those that were connected with the execution of land grants and more or less with revenue administration have been mentioned by name.

1. Rāmacarita, 1/31.

2. JBORS, V, p 588.



Some direct and circumstantial evidence goes to show that there was an elaborate and highly organized system working in the Pāla and Sena periods. The following incident from the life of Dipaṅkara Śrījñāna Atiśa recorded by his Tibetan biographer throws interesting light on the duties of a 'tarika' (ferryman) who is a royal officer in the Pāla grants. The Tibetan envoy Nag-tcho, also known as Vinayadhāra, who was deputed to invite and escort the great Buddhist patriarch to Tibet, reached the bank of the Ganges, not far from the site of the Virkamaśilā monastery, in the company of a Nepalese chief about 1035-1040 A.D. during the reign of Nayapāla. "It was at sunset that they arrived at the crossing of the river, when a boat with a party of passengers was leaving for the opposite bank. They requested the boatman to take them across the river but he said that he could not do so just then but he would come later on. After dusk the boat returned and first took the prince, who was a great man." It was night and the Tibetan party thought that the boat would not return again and made arrangement for passing the whole night there. At a later hour the boat returned and Vinayadhara said to the boatman,—"I thought you would not come back at this time." The boatman replied, "In our country there is law. Having assured you that I would come, I could not neglect to do so without being liable to punishment." The boatman advised them to pass the night under the turret of the gateway of the monastery as there would not be thieves to disturb them.<sup>1</sup>

The descriptions of land in the Sena grants in minutest details according to different standards of measurement in different localities have led one scholar to surmise that there was a general system of land survey and measurement in vogue in Bengal under the Senas.<sup>2</sup> These land charters were drawn generally in the administrative headquarters and the description of the land donated in minutest possible details suggests that, like the 'pustapālas' of the Damodarpur plates, there must have been record-keepers in the 'viṣayas' at least. The care with which the boundaries have been

1. S. C. Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*. p. 57.

2. Dr. Ghoshal, *Op. cit.*, p. 265.



accurately described also supplies a good commentary on the work of those who were entrusted with the execution of these duties.

The efficiency of the army and police is clear from the broad political history of the period under review. The Pālas and Senas were beset with tremendous odds and difficulties from the very inception of their power. No less than twenty-five foreign invasions are alluded to in the records of the contemporary dynasties during the Pāla period.<sup>1</sup> These invaders were great powers like the Pratihāras, Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Kalacuris and Candellas. Three times the Pālas were dislodged from their 'janakabhū' Varendra, as the Paharpur inscription of the 5th year of Mahendrapāla, Bangar Pillar inscription of the Kamboja chief and the Rāmacarita show. Yet the plain fact that the Pālas could hold themselves as a great power in north-eastern India for about four centuries demonstrates their military strength. The Senas were also at war with the neighbouring powers, the Gāhaḍavālas, Kalinga and Kāmarūpa kings. Like other powers of northern India the Sena power succumbed to the Muslim invasion. But incidental evidences from the Tabaqati-Nasiri go to show that the Hindu kingdom in East Bengal continued to exist for another century after the conquest of north-western Bengal about 1200 A.D. and not less than four expeditions were at least undertaken by the Muslim governors of Gauḍa against East Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Not only foreign invasions were ward off and internal rebellions suppressed, but the architectural and sculptural remains and literary productions of the period are conclusive proof of the fact that Bengal enjoyed the fruits of peace under the Pālas and Senas—only possible under good government. Good government always implies the efficiency and perfect organisation of the machinery responsible for it.

The recently discovered Irda plate of the Kamboja king Nayapāladeva<sup>3</sup> is important for our purpose, as it supplies the

1. IHQ, XII, p. 613. 2. Tabaqati Nasiri, Trans. by Rāverty, p. 587, 132, 714 15, 558. IHQ, XII, pp. 81 ff. 3. I am thankful to Mr. N. G. Majumdar of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, for sending me an advanced copy of his paper on the Irda Copper plate (EI, XXII, p. 150).



names of many new officials. We have suggested that most of the important officers at the centre had separate departments of their own and this is perhaps confirmed by the mention of *adhyakṣa-varggam-akḥilam karaṇais-sametam*<sup>1</sup> of this plate. *Senāpatiṇ-ca saha sainik-saṁghamukhyaiḥ* shows that there were army guilds which supplied recruits to the army.<sup>2</sup> *Ṛtviks* were perhaps learned in, and reciters of, *Rgvedas*. *Dharmajñas* perhaps advised the king in religious matters and morals. *Pradeśṭṛs* are referred to in the *Arthaśāstra* and may correspond to the *prādeśikas* of Aśoka's inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> *Guḍha-puruṣas* were officers of the secret service and *Mantrapālas* perhaps advised the king in political matters.

The *Mallasarula* plate is also interesting and important in other respects also. As in the plates of the Gupta period and in the *Faridpur* plates, land was not sold by the district government but by the *Mahattaras*. The importance of the *Mahattaras* as a class of officials or semi-officials has been discussed, and from this plate it appears that very *Āgrahāra* had at least one *Mahattara* in this locality. In case of one *Āgrahāra* only two *Mahattaras* have been mentioned. It seems that they sold land in their personal capacities, for this would bring religious merit to themselves as well as to the emperor also. The announcement of this transaction was simultaneously made by the *Mahattaras* and the *Vihādhikaraṇa Vithi* was a small territorial unit and had an *adhikaraṇa* (office). In the list of officers in addition to *Karttākṛtika*, *Kumārāmātya*, *Bhogapatika* and *Viṣayapati* we find also *Audraṅgika*, *Aurṇas-thānika*, *Hiraṇyasamudāyika*, *Pattalaka* and *Avasathika* who are otherwise unknown and therefore their functions cannot be precisely determined. The fact that there existed so many officers of various descriptions in the sixth century clearly points to a highly organised system of government in the *Vardhamanabhukti*.

1. 1. 84.

2. This may correspond to the *Sreṇivāla* of the *Arthaśāstra*.

3. Bhandarkar, Aśoka, 1936, p. 59. "It is, however, safer, to take *Prādeśika* in the sense of an officer in charge of a Division."



# Early History of Bengal

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